

25 GAMES / BARD'S TALE III • EBONSTAR • JINXTER
REVIEWED / THE THREE STOOGES • ULTIMA V • MORE!

COMPUTER PLAY

SN 14042
AUGUST

\$2.95 US
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THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO COMPUTER GAMES

The cover art for 'The Three Stooges' game features the three main characters: Moe Howard (top right), Larry Fine (bottom left), and Curly Howard (bottom right). Moe is shown with a surprised expression, Larry has his signature wild hair, and Curly has a determined look. The title 'the THREE STOOGESES™' is prominently displayed in large red letters at the top left. Below it, a subtitle reads: 'Can THREE Stooges Save ONE orphanage From FOREclosure?!'. A small box labeled 'OUR HEROES' contains the text: 'They can save the day by making ASSETS of themselves!'. In the bottom left corner, there's a small illustration of a man in a top hat and suit, labeled 'THE EVIL BANKER'. At the very bottom of the cover, there's a row of five women looking towards the right.



SIMULATION! Take off with PROJECT STEALTH FIGHTER
FANTASY! The epic story of BARD'S TALE III
ADVENTURE! On the beat with POLICE QUEST
STRATEGY! Japanese history in NOBUNAGA'S AMBITION

Strategic Studies Group Presents

**HOT.
MEAN.
RADIO-
ACTIVE.**

WASTELAND

AUGUST 20, 2087

Nothing could be worse than this god-forsaken, radioactive desert.

More Snipedroids! All tracking me with them death glares. And them Uzis. They're weird trigger-twitchin' folks. I suspect it's them poisoning the water.

Or maybe it's those Leather Thugs. Heck, I don't know anymore. I heard they have a bunch of civilians cut off east of Ranger Center, which is where I'm headed. Hope not. They want me dead. Like every other mutant this side of Vegas.

The worst part is, I'm getting to be as bad as they are. You wouldn't believe some of the ways I've learned to kill. I hang out in sewers, and my best friend is a MAC 17 submachine gun.

Gramps talked about life before the nuclear war. All I know is I don't want others living this way. Gotta rebuild this desert right. Gotta make it so you can sleep with your eyes closed.

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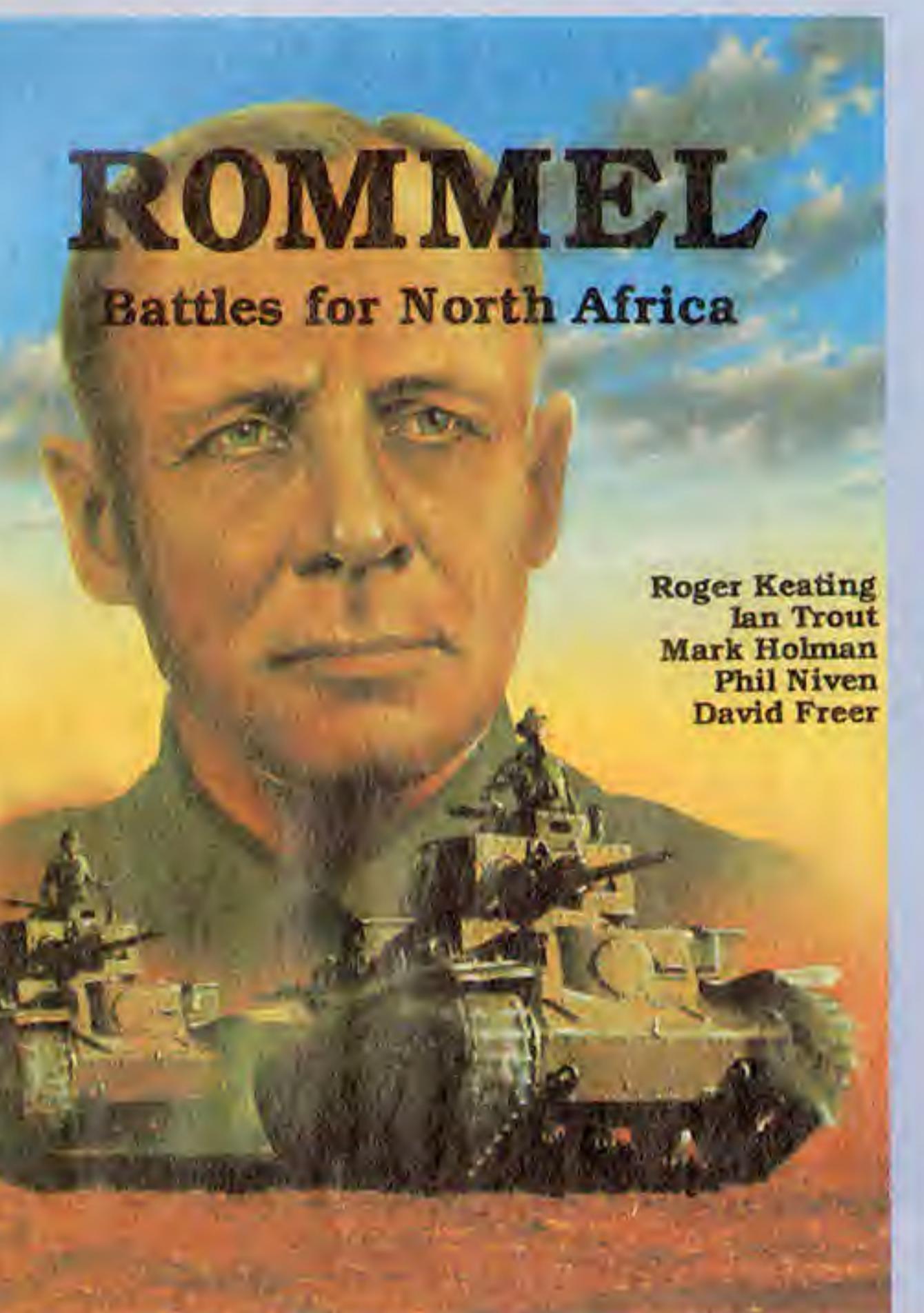
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The Legend of the Desert Fox



By January 1941, the War in North Africa was going very badly for the Axis powers. The Italian army had been routed out of Egypt and almost out of Libya. A small German force was scraped together to try and stem the tide. Command of this force was given to General Irwin Rommel. . . and for the next two years, outnumbered and poorly supplied, the Desert Fox out-witted and out-generalled all of his foes.

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Conquer Your Galaxy

REACH FOR THE STARS

The Conquest of the Galaxy
THIRD EDITION



Roger Keating and Ian Trout

Reach for the Stars is Strategic Studies Group's all-time classic game of space exploration and conquest. The third edition contains two great games in one; the original **Reach for the Stars** and an entirely new scenario, with lots of options for advanced play.

Whichever game you choose to play, you're in for a tough time. It's a four-cornered contest for domination of the galaxy and there's only one winner. The computer plays all places not taken by humans and it never gives anyone an even break.

To win a game of **Reach for the Stars** you must have explored all of the galaxy and colonized the choicest portions. You will have expanded your industry, engaged in frantic R&D, and produced a large space navy. This will have been employed in settling territorial disputes with your neighbours. As always, the person with the biggest navy gets to adjust the border.

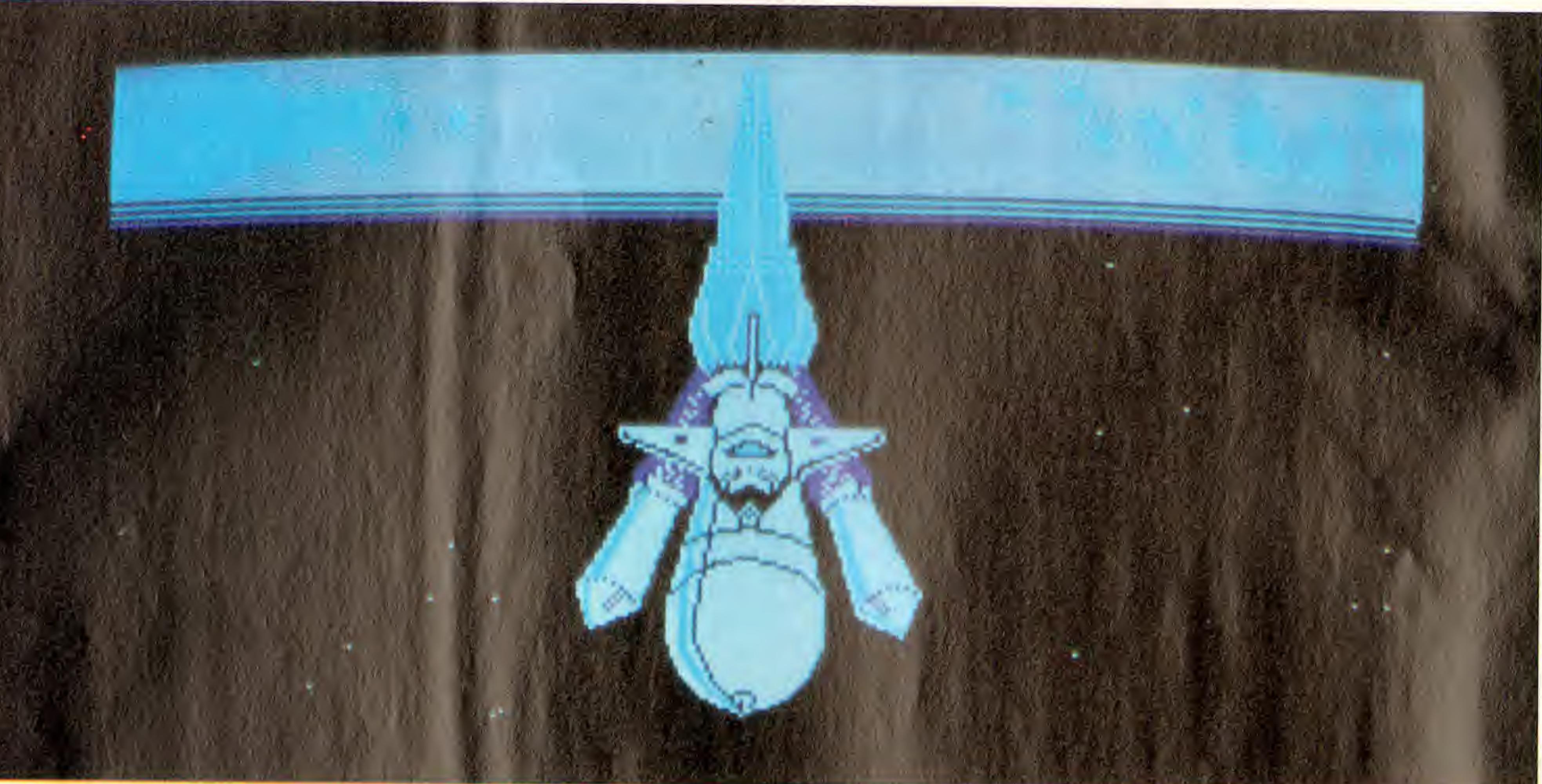
It's not as easy as it sounds. Do the wrong thing and it could be three against one, especially if you're playing against Keating's Enhanced Veteran computer players. They just don't like you to start with, and can get really annoyed if you mess with them. That's why there are Beginner and Experienced players on which to first practice your galactic domination skills.

Whatever your qualifications as a space tyrant, **Reach for the Stars** is guaranteed to be totally addictive. . .

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C64/128 computers.
Price \$45.00.

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Editor's Page

Ramblings from the Big Kahuna

Surf's up! There's a new kid in computer town and we want to welcome you to the wide world of computer entertainment. If our market research is worth anything then the title *COMPUTER PLAY* should already give you a fair indication of what our editorial coverage will be. If not, read on!

COMPUTER PLAY will review more games, will cover more categories of games and will reach a larger audience than any computer entertainment magazine to date.

The types of games we will cover include: Adventure (both text and graphic), Fantasy, Mystery, Science Fiction, Sports (arcade and simulation), Role-Playing, Military Strategy, Non-Military Strategy, Arcade, Vehicle Simulations, Board Game Simulations, Gambling, TV Shows, Trivia, Cartridge (Nintendo) and otherwise difficult to label games such as "Dr Ruth's Computer Game of Good Sex".

The simplest definition of our editorial purpose would be to say that if it can be "played" on a computer and is entertaining - then you will find it reviewed in *COMPUTER PLAY*. This would also include such items as "creativity" software, such as music and

paint programs. Educational software that has an entertainment focus will also find a home here.

COMPUTER PLAY will review games on all types of computer formats, including *Nintendo* cartridges. We will be biased to IBM-PC format software but no computer will be ignored. We know that *Nintendo Entertainment Systems* are not "computers" in the traditional sense but they come close enough.

The most important criteria for any review type publication is credibility. You want to know that when *COMPUTER PLAY* gives high marks to a particular product that you can rely on it when plunking down \$40 or so for a game. Our long-term success will be measured by the degree of honesty that we are able to deliver to our readers. Two major factors will help insure that credibility, the editor and our superb staff of reviewers.

The editor has been a gamer for about 30 years. He started with Avalon Hill board games, such as Tactics and Kriegspiel, in the late 1950's. That was soon followed by table-top APBA Baseball from 1958 until today. Tournament chess. Near Life-Master in

Duplicate bridge. Computer games on mainframes (PLATO) in the 60's and the first micro games in the late 70's. He was an Assistant Editor at Computer Gaming World magazine, a highly recommended publication. In all, your editor knows games, plays games, loves games and can write about games of all types.

We have assembled, using the new Reviewer Construction Kit, the finest group of games reviewers in the world. Our leading star is *Bob Lindstrom*, who was voted Best Reviewer of 1987 by the Software Publisher's Association. *Margo Comstock* was editor and publisher of SoftTalk magazine. *Rusel DeMaria* is a highly respected reviewer and technical book author. *Roy Wagner* is familiar to everyone in the Commodore or QuantumLink worlds. Future issues will include work by *Shay Addams* and *Orson Scott Card*. *Shay* is editor of Questbusters magazine and otherwise known as "Mr. Adventure". *Orson Scott Card* is a best-selling and award-winning science fiction writer. His book "Ender's Game" won both the Hugo and Nebula awards - the SF equivalents of the Pulitzer Prize for literature. As the beer ad says, "It just doesn't get any better" ▶



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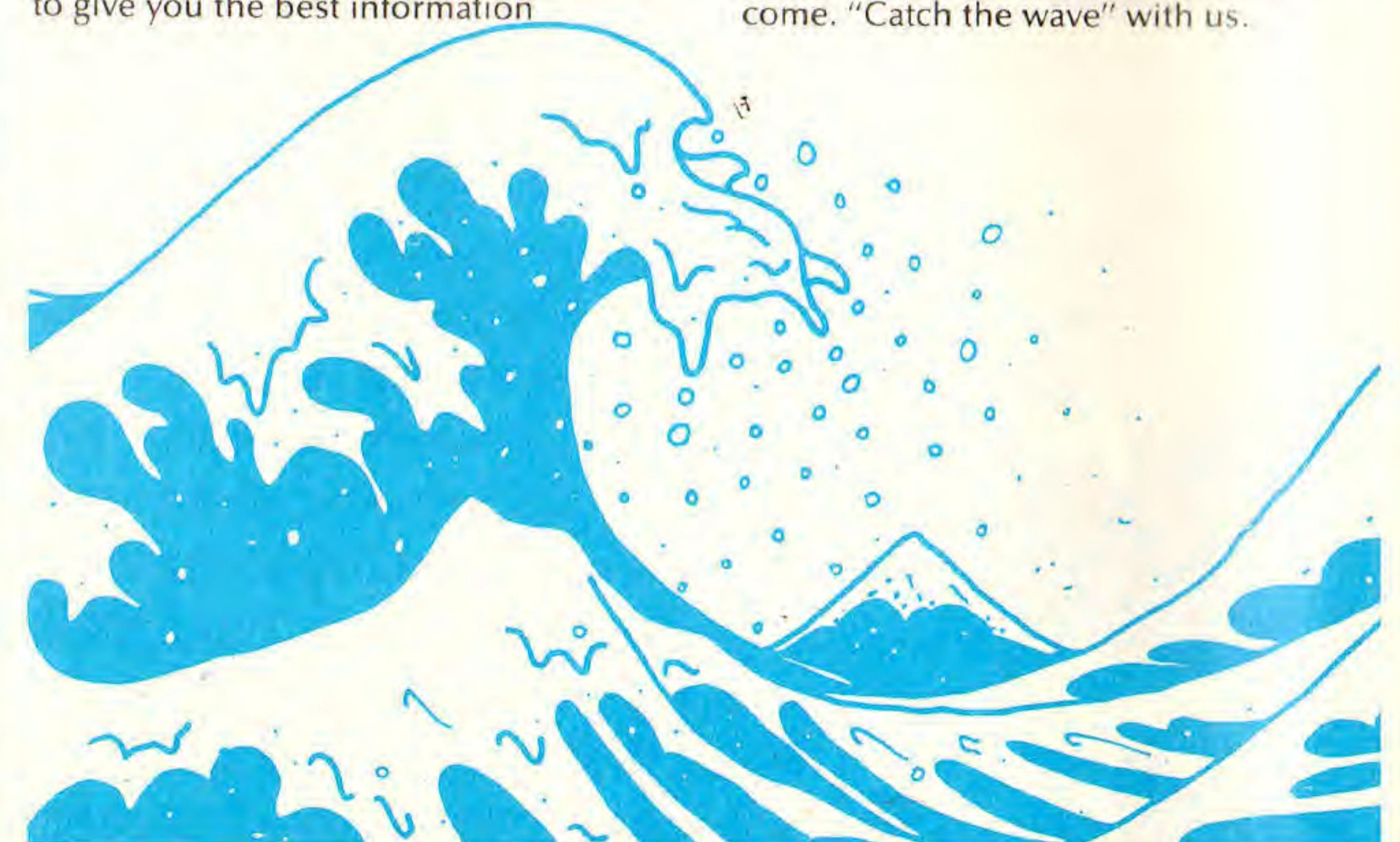
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than this."

We need to say a little about our philosophy of game reviews. Each reviewer is instructed to answer two simple questions. "Is this game enjoyable to play?" "Is this game worth purchasing?" The reviews will go into detail about the various features of each game but those two questions will remain the essential elements of each review. Every full-length review will also contain a *COMPUTER PLAY SCORECARD* that will give you a concrete rating for each game. Our reviews will also be written from the viewpoint of the "average" gamer. If the game is a military simulation, you don't want a five page analysis of the specific units that were involved in that battle. You want to know if the game was enjoyable. *COMPUTER PLAY* will answer that question and give you a numerical rating so that you can compare it with other games you may be considering purchasing. Entertainment is our objective and in the words of the old song, "Momma don't allow no pedantry round here!"

Computer gamer budgets are limited (at least mine is) and our overall goal is to give you the best information

possible in order to maximize your computer pleasures. We will give you information in as straight, unbiased and entertaining a fashion as we know how. When a game is bad, we'll tell you it's bad. When a game is great, we'll tell you it's great and why it is great. Contrary to some magazines, you WILL find negative reviews in *COMPUTER PLAY*. If you find that hard to believe then just check out our review of *Hunt For Red October*.

A bit of explanation may be in order for our references to surfing jargon. *COMPUTER PLAY*'s home is located in Huntington Beach, California. Surf City, USA. The gestalt of surfer philosophy will be found in our editorial focus. The same elements of clear pleasure that can be found on a good wave are what we look for in a computer game.

We encourage reader feedback to our publication. Tell us what you like and what you don't like. If you don't like it, we'll get rid of it! Our credibility rests on satisfying our readers, not our advertisers, and we promise to keep that fact in mind at all times. We hope that you will continue to enjoy *COMPUTER PLAY* for many years to come. "Catch the wave" with us.

Industry News & Views

By Bill Oxner

What's happening in the computer game industry?

Since this is our first issue we should take a moment to describe the types of information that will appear in this column. You will find rumors about new games, bugs in existing games, stories about game companies, anecdotes, etc. Basically, your editor will simply sit down at the keyboard and tell you about the stories that are currently circulating within the game industry. Nothing structured, nothing formal — just our impressions of where the games industry is and where it is going.

Where in the world are computer games?

Much of the material this time comes from overseas. There is a world of gaming software being produced in Europe and Japan. Unfortunately, most American gamers are completely uninformed about the quality and quantity of foreign computer games. This month, we'll try to fill in a bit of the information void.

There isn't such a thing as the "European" computer game industry but there are very large and very good game companies in the individual countries. Each nation has its own unique characteristics in terms of games.

West Germany is dominated by **Commodore**. The standard of living is similar to the USA and the Amiga has been very successful. Germans are very computer literate. In fact, a West German hacker was recently successful in cracking into a large number of American databases, including NASA. The German computer game industry is booming. The emphasis is on graphics and action and our reviewers tell us that some of the best work being done today on the Amiga is happening in Germany.

France is **Apple** country. Other machines do sell but the market dominance by Apple is remarkable. France also is unique in its acceptance of videotext information. With government support, almost every single home and business in France is linked by computer. The trick was to replace the phonebook with a computer terminal. In France, you don't get a new phonebook each year — you are linked with the central phone information system by your computer terminal. However, that is not the only use for the system. You can also access a nationwide database for information and communications. It's as if every home in America had a computer terminal and was able to easily connect to Compuserve. We like to think that the United States is leading

the computer revolution but situations like France make you wonder.

On the "more things change, the more they stay the same" front — the most popular use of the French system is for computer dating. Leave it to the French to find a way to humanize technology in the best way.

In terms of games, France tends to graphics and adventures. The Mac is extremely popular and there are probably more Mac games available in France than here. Again, our reviewers tell us that the quality is tremendous.

The Bulldog on tape

England is a complicated situation. The British government has attempted to

There are graphics games in Japan that would absolutely stun the American game consumer.

encourage a domestic computer industry, with limited success. The major machine in England is the **Amstrad**, although the market is rather fragmented. It may come as a shock to American gamers but a large percentage of the game software in England is still being provided on cassette tapes! We've heard various explanations for this phenomenon.

The one that seems to make the most sense is a relationship to the unemployment rate for British youth, which is somewhere around 30%. British youth love games but they just can't afford disk drives so the manufacturers are forced to continue delivering product on cassette tapes at cheap prices.

British games seem to favor action arcade formats, although adventure games are also quite popular. The overall quality of British games is good but not up to the standards of the competition. We have a review of a British import in this issue — **JINXTER** by Rainbird.

The Sun Also Rises

Japan could easily be the subject of an entire issue of our magazine. I can't stress

enough how little American gamers know about what is happening in the Japanese game industry.

Let's start with quality. One American game manufacturer who sells in Japan and travels there often told me that the Japanese are five years ahead of American designers in terms of graphics! He says there are graphics games in Japan that would absolutely stun the American game consumer.

A bit of history may help explain the Japanese ability with graphics. The Japanese language does not have an alphabet in the way an English speaker thinks of alphabets. Instead, it uses "ideographs", which are entire ideas in a single graphic character. Try to imagine a typewriter that did not have individual letters but instead had to have a key for every word in the English language!

English writers use the Roman alphabet and we are culturally inclined to think in terms of letters and numbers. Japanese writers use graphic characters and are in tune culturally with the concept of graphics. The growth in the computer industry came at a time when Japan was emerging as a world business leader. Computers were essential to growth but computer technology (in the West) was mentally tied to the Roman alphabet. It is relatively easy to design a word processor in the English language. It is a mind-boggling task to design a word processor in Japanese that must deal with the graphic characters of the language. However, the Japanese did it. In the process, they also advanced FAR up the learning curve of graphics. After the incredible challenge of designing a graphic word processor, designing a graphics based game is child's play. Another interesting fact is that Japan continues to be graphics oriented in their communications. Since a typewriter based on ideograms is impractical (although they do exist), most business communications are still handwritten. Given the Japanese love for technology, this has now been translated into a fascination with FAX machines. We're told that almost every single business in Japan has a FAX machine. Even the corner tavern has one to place orders with their distributors. The orders are handwritten (in ideograms) and then faxed to their destination. In cultural terms, the Japanese have found a way to maintain their traditions while finding a technological answer to modern communications.

Given what we've said about graphics in the Japanese culture, it will come as no surprise that graphics and action games are

the top titles in Japan. Adventure games also do extremely well.

BANZAI!

Next we come to one of the most fascinating aspects of the game industry in Japan - hysteria. That's really the only good word to describe the Japanese reaction to certain computer game products.

The Wizardry series is highly popular in Japan. There have been game conventions devoted exclusively to this one game — conventions that draw thousands of participants. Bob Woodhead, designer of Wizardry, is honored in much the same way as a rock star.

The greatest mass hysteria is reserved for Nintendo products. Nintendo entertainment systems (and clones) have achieved about a 40% penetration of Japanese homes. Japan has approximately 125 million people, about half the population of the USA. The introduction of a new Nintendo product can result in scenes that are unimaginable to American gamers.

ZELDA

One of the most popular Nintendo titles around the world has been THE LEGEND OF ZELDA. It has been on sale in the USA for about a year and has recently passed the 1,000,000 unit sales mark. It was even more popular in Japan. Nintendo had been advertising a sequel, ZELDA II: The Adventure of Link, for several months and anticipation was building in both Japan and America.

In early March of this year, ZELDA II finally was debuted in Japan. The result? There were over 1,000,000 cartridges sold on the first day! I am told that some schools were closed because so many students had cut classes to buy the game. There were block-long lines with roped-off areas in front of electronic stores. Apparently, there were no riots but one can imagine the scene of thousands of young adults lined up to buy a computer game. ZELDA II will not be available here until October 1988. A warning to those with friends in Japan — the cartridges for Nintendo games are NOT compatible with the US machine versions.

It's hard to tell if the same hysteria will occur here but there are some signs. My own son turned 8 in May but he is already a Nintendo nut. He is very much aware of ZELDA II and has been questioning me for months about when I would have a copy. I have to gently explain to him that even magazine editors have a tough time getting review copies of hot Nintendo products.

The cartridge future

For those of us who have been in the computer game business for a number of years, we remember a similar hysteria during the height of the Atari craze in the early 80's. Arcade games suddenly became a multi-billion dollar business and no one could predict how high it could go. Actually, it turned out that it could only go down. Atari crashed just about as fast as it went up. Some people question whether Nintendo faces a similar fate. In talks with many industry leaders I would say that a direct replay is unlikely. Nintendo seems to be handling things with typical Japanese thoroughness. It

for Nintendo machines. Activision and Broderbund were among the first but don't be surprised to see more and more of your favorite game titles being translated into Nintendo cartridges.

One final example of the craze. We spoke to a new company that has yet to actually ship a single cartridge. However, they have licensed some game titles and are awaiting the first shipment of cartridges from Japan (all Nintendo cartridges are made in Japan). Before delivering a single cartridge, as a new company, they have already booked \$2,500,000 in orders from retailers! The more we spoke to the cartridge game companies the more we decided that perhaps we are in the wrong business. We promise not to abandon you after this first issue but the amounts of money being made in cartridges is certainly tempting.

More history

I have noted the general ignorance of American gamers in regard to foreign game quality. This ignorance also frequently applies to American game magazine editors. We were recently introduced to two remarkable games from a company called KOEI. The first, NOBUNAGA'S AMBITION, is covered in this issue. The second, ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS, will be reviewed by Bob Lindstrom in issue #2. The overall game quality and graphics were among the best we've ever seen. However, these are not hot off the presses. Both games have been available in Japan for almost four years. Four year old computer games that are superior (within their genre) to anything we've yet seen here in the States. Depressing, isn't it?

PG-13

If you have any lingering doubts about the differing cultural values between America and Japan, an older product by Koei would be a good example of cultural diversity. The software was called "Night Life" and we will have to tread carefully in describing the product. It was basically a sexual database and spreadsheet. The owner would boot up the computer and load the program. The essential nature was that of a diary. The owner would enter specific data on dates, times, location, duration, positions and results. These could then be accessed at a later date for statistical comparisons (or more vivid memories). We will leave it to your imagination for the various humorous applications of this product. It was also a

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Atari crashed just about as fast as it went up. Some people question whether Nintendo faces a similar fate.

is obvious that sales cannot continue to grow at the current feverish pace but our best estimates are that there will not be a collapse of the market.

The current numbers are a bit staggering. Nintendo will sell between 5 and 7 million base units in the USA this year at about \$100 a pop. Nintendo and their licensees will also sell between 20 and 25 million cartridge games at about \$40 a unit. That means an overall market of close to 2 billion dollars!

How do these numbers compare with the pure computer game market? Most major manufacturers would consider a game a big hit if it achieved 50,000 unit sales. Perhaps the biggest seller of all time (in computer games) would be FLIGHT SIMULATOR. The last figures we saw indicated total sales of around 750,000 copies. These were sold over a period of about five years. So, Nintendo sold more cartridges in one day than the best selling computer game title has sold in five years!

American game manufacturers are not unaware of these figures. Several computer game companies have already licensed titles

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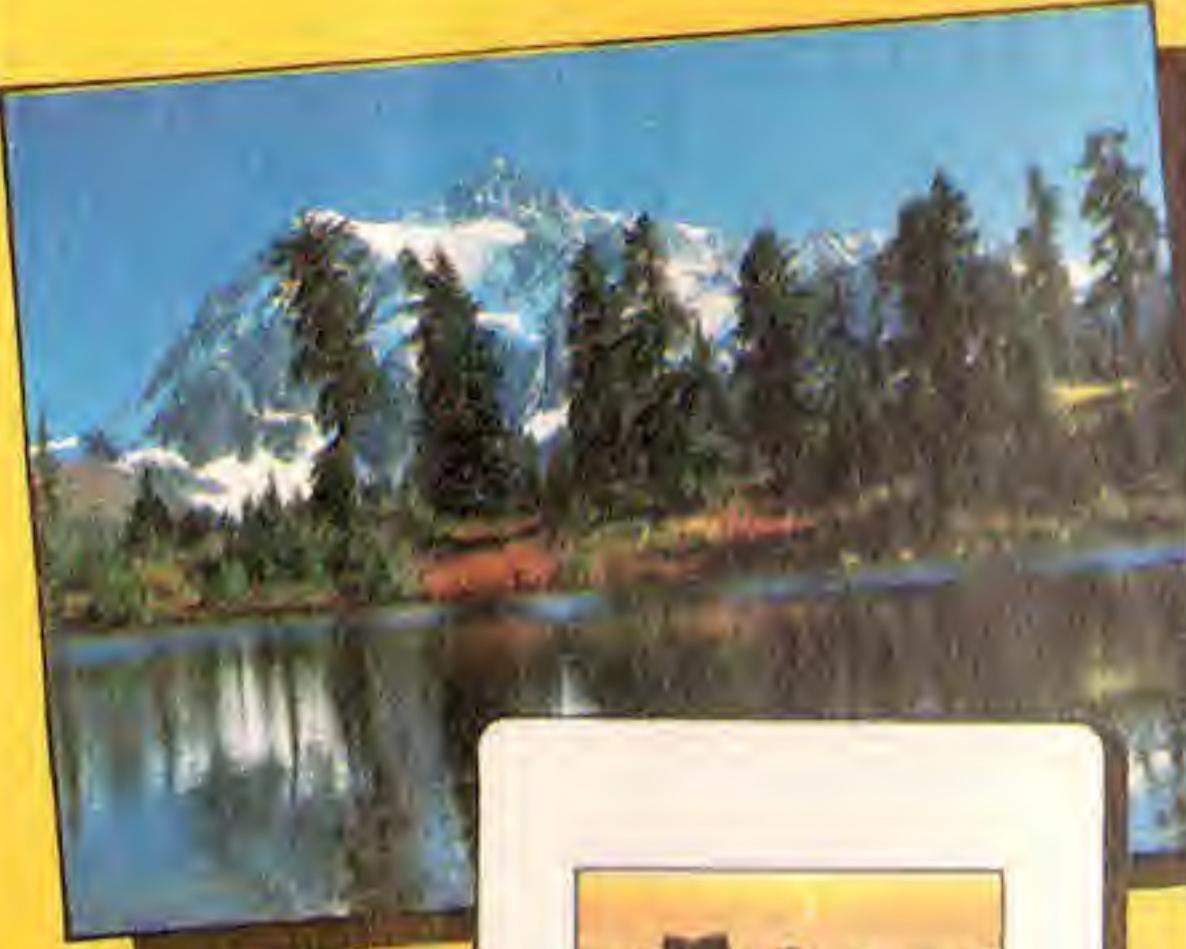
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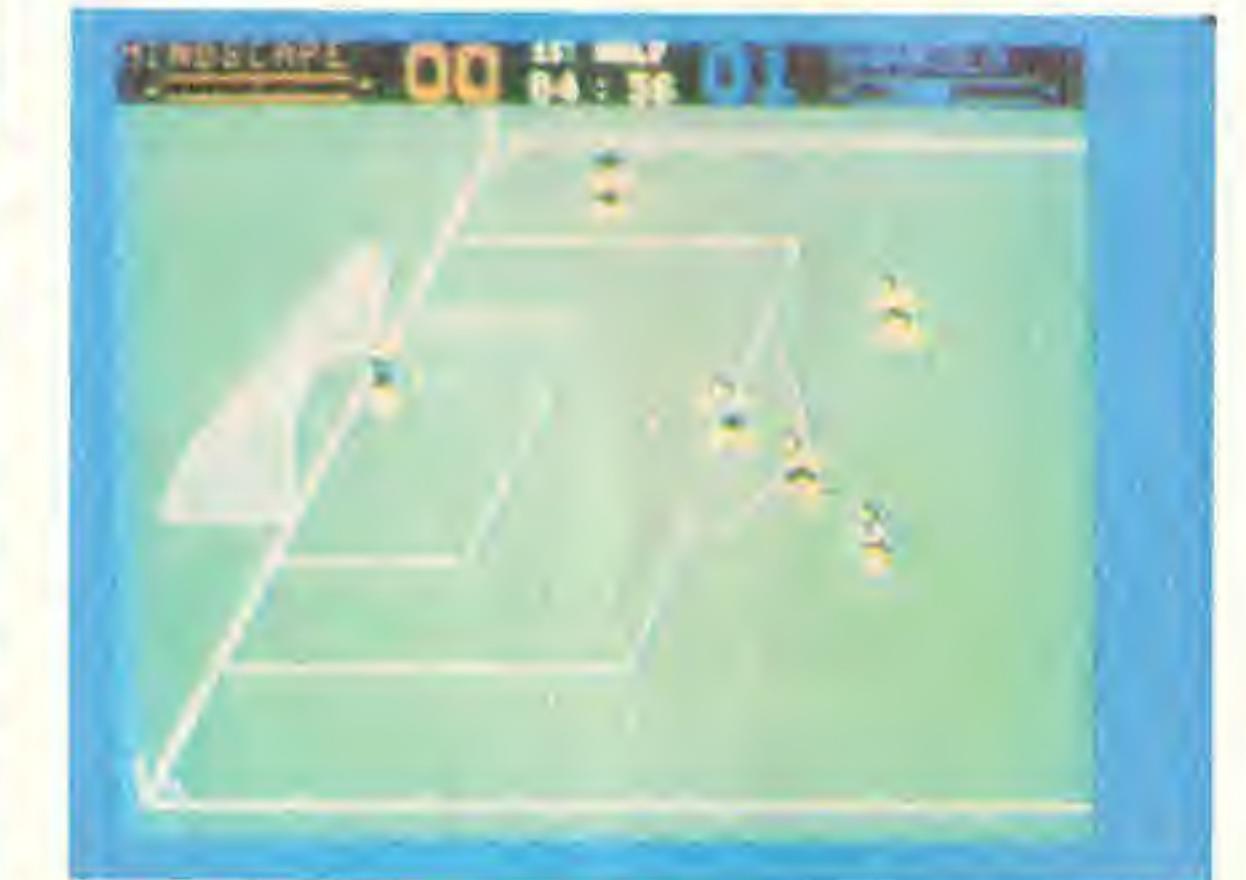
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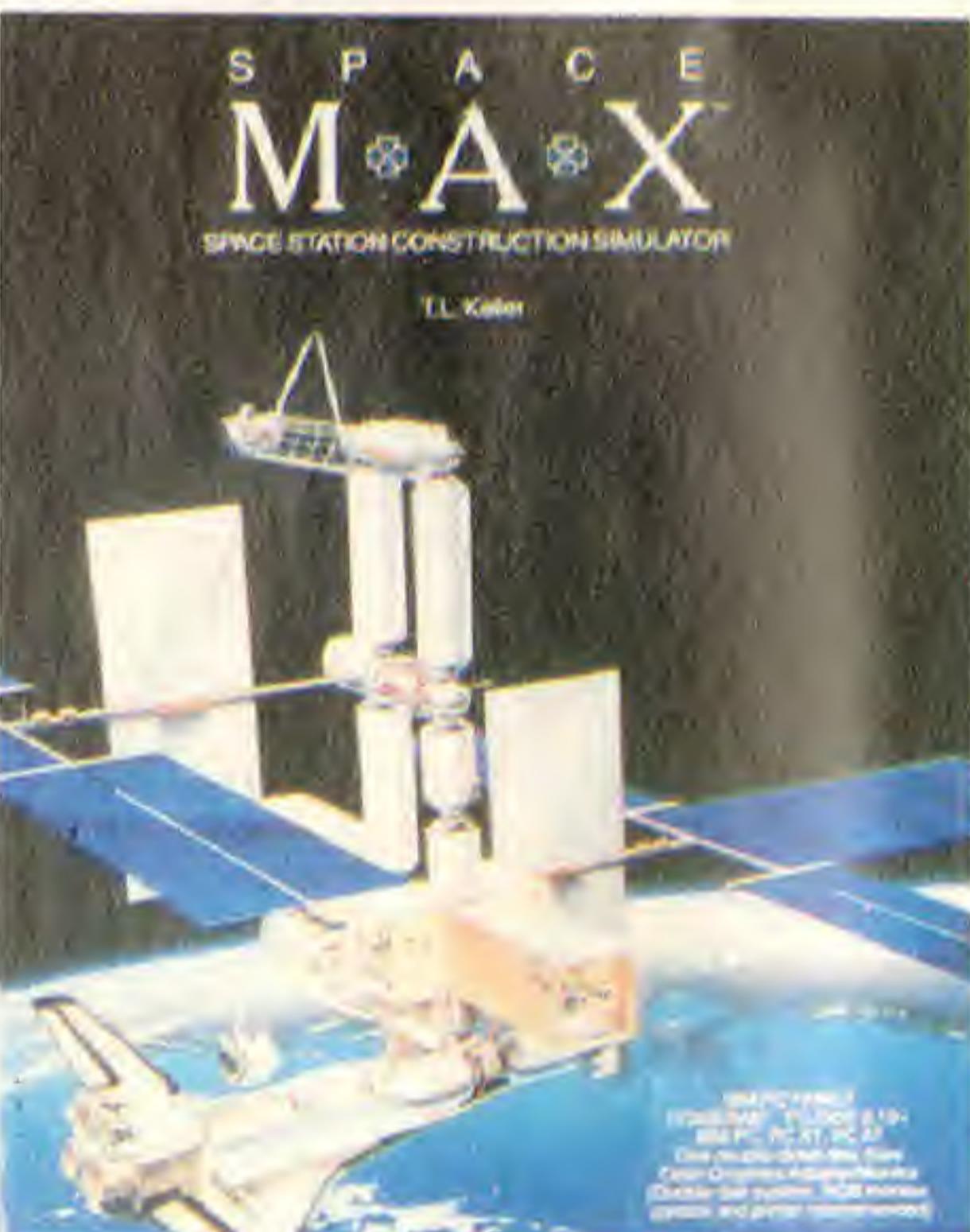
WHERE IN EUROPE IS CARMEN SANDIEGO? is the newest release in this series of geographical adventure games. Players track thieves around Europe using a Rand McNally Atlas (provided) to decipher clues. By playing the game, players learn geographic, economic and historic information about the 34 nations of Europe. On-screen map of Europe. On-line database. Given the dismal state of geographic knowledge by most American students, Broderbund is to be thanked for their efforts in the Carmen series. Learning can be fun when presented in excellent packages such as this one. IBM, Apple, Tandy & C64. Broderbund. Circle Reader Service Number 21.



I GET A KICK OUT OF YOU

SUPERSTAR SOCCER is a complete, realistic, outdoor soccer simulation. The game offers three different modes of play. You can take the field as a player and run, shoot, pass and defend. Or, you can act strictly as the coach and call strategies during a game. Finally, you

can act as the team's general manager. You make trades, recruit players, conduct training camps and make line changes. Your team is part of a 64 team league within 4 divisions. Your job is to build a team that can rise to Division One and win the SA Tournament Cup. In IBM EGA mode the graphics are the best I've seen in a sports simulation. The "look and feel" of soccer is well represented. Play versus the computer, against another player or two players versus the computer. IBM & C64. Mindscape. Circle Reader Service Number 19.



MORE HEADROOM

If you've ever wondered what it's like to be an engineer with NASA then SPACE MAX will serve as your entrance exam. Subtitled SPACE STATION CONSTRUCTION SIMULATOR, this is not a "game". It is a very complex and realistic simulation of the construction and operation of the orbiting Space Station. You have responsibility for the planning of all payloads to be launched, sequencing and assembly of the station, production of laboratories, etc. The manual is 138 pages of extensive technical documentation. A true challenge for the serious space buff. IBM. Final Frontier Software. Circle Reader Service Number 4.

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Snapshots

NYUK, NYUK, NYUK

By Roy Wagner

chance square, and one that controls the speed at which the selection hand moves from one square to another. The amount of money earned varies for each activity square.

PAY FOR PLAY

In a scene from one of their earliest shorts, HOI POLLOI, the Stooges are hired to serve pies to some very posh guests. Whenever the Stooges get near pies, a pie fight is only seconds away. They get paid for each pie that they "serve" and receive a bonus if more than a specified number of pies are served. However, this episode ends if they get hit by five pies. If you keep throwing fast enough, the guests don't have much chance to throw back. If they do, you should stop throwing and duck for cover.

The play of the game is somewhat similar to that of a board game. Six play-option squares are displayed at the top of the screen. A hand moves randomly from one square to another. You have ten seconds to press the joystick button to stop the hand on the square of your choice, otherwise it will stop on a square. There are several squares offering both good and bad "moves".

The Stooges have thirty moves in which to raise the money. Each move represents one day. There are five squares on which you can earn money, two that work against your reaching your goal, one

cart that stays ahead of them drops various items. They get extra points for each item that they can "pickup" by driving over it.

In the short, PUNCH DRUNKS, Moe enters Curly in a boxing match. The Stooges' "secret weapon" is a violin. When Larry plays POP GOES THE WEASEL, Curly goes wild and is certain to knock out the champion. But the violin breaks and Larry must go down the street to get another. The sidewalk is cluttered with trash cans, crates, sleeping dogs, and ladders. Add to that an occasional light post, telephone pole, and fire hydrant and getting the violin is not so easy. Larry must get back before the end of the last round of the fight or no money is received.

In a classic scene from the short, DUTIFUL BUT DUMB, Curly is trying to eat a bowl of oyster soup to which he is adding oyster crackers. A live oyster in the bowl seems to also like the crackers. Curly gets paid for the number of crackers that he can eat. If an oyster grabs the spoon and cracker, Curly has to "shake" it off. He receives a bonus if he eats all the crackers.

SOMETIMES IT COSTS

If you land on square with picture of Mr. Fleecem, you will usually lose some of your hard-earned money in the form of taxes or mortgage payments. Sometimes you will be docked a few days. Another far more critical and painful square to land on is one with a mousetrap. Snap goes the trap and Moe loses a finger from the hand used to select the squares.

10 ▶





A BOX OFFICE HIT

Once four fingers are lost, Moe and the others can no longer work. The mortgage is declared due and the game is over.

There are a lot of mousetraps. Timing where the hand is when you attempt to stop it takes some very quick reflexes. To complicate this, the hand moves slightly faster each day. Fortunately, there is a way to slow down the rate at which the hand moves. This requires stopping the hand on a square that takes the stooges to a square with no value. This angers Moe and he lays into Larry and Curly with pokes, punches, pulls, slaps, kicks, and fakes. For each successful contact, the rate at which hand moves is slowed down. But the other two will dodge hits and also hit back. This speeds up the movement of the hand. This is an important square on which to be joystick proficient. Successful completion of the game and additional end game bonuses depend on your skill with this option. Without controlling the speed of the hand, your game play will rest fully on chance landings.

Speaking of chance, that is another type of square. This one shows a question mark and what you get when you land on it can be either financial reward or penalty. You will either find some money or meet up with Mr. Fleecem, who will be his typical villainous self.

CONSIDERED TRIVIA

One other square that you can land on is labeled "TRIVIA". Here you are asked one or more questions about the Stooges. Some of them are answered in the historical notes that come with the game, others are much more obscure. A correct answer to the single question asked in the Amiga version is worth \$600. Each correct answer in a set of three questions in the C64 version is worth \$200. If you know the answer, this is a great way to accumulate easy money. Otherwise, it should be a learning experience that will be profitable the next time the game is played.

Name: THE THREE STOOGES
Type: Arcade
Formats: Amiga & C64
Publisher: Cinemaware
Designers: Several
Ages: 10 to adult
Players: One only
Requirements: Joystick
Price: \$34.95 (C64)

Quality Level:	Intermediate
Packaging:	Very Good (8)
Documentation:	Very Good (8)
Graphics/Text:	Excellent (9)
Usability:	Excellent (9)
RATING:	8.75

RATING: **8.75**

slowing the selection speed.

This game will be available for several types of computers. I found the Amiga graphics outstanding. I was even more impressed with the scrolling screen graphics and sounds on the C64 version. The Amiga version accesses the disk drives too often, even on a 3 megabyte Amiga. Apparently, it does not check to see how much memory is available. (optional instructions are given for loading the game onto a hard drive or into RAM). The C64 version required frequent, but efficient, disk flipping of a single diskette. This often provided a welcome pause in the frantic action of the game. The game does have a pause feature, but does not save a game in progress. A typical game will take less than an hour to play to a successful conclusion.

I think that this is the best game yet from **Cinemaware**. Very playable, lots of fun, and requiring only simple joystick skills. This game also is the first release using actual movie images and sounds; a true product from the cinema to the computer.

(Note: Early versions of this game for the Amiga and C64 can lock up in the middle of a game. This is due to an early version of copy protection that has since been changed. If you are having this problem, send your original disks back to CinemaWare for replacement.)

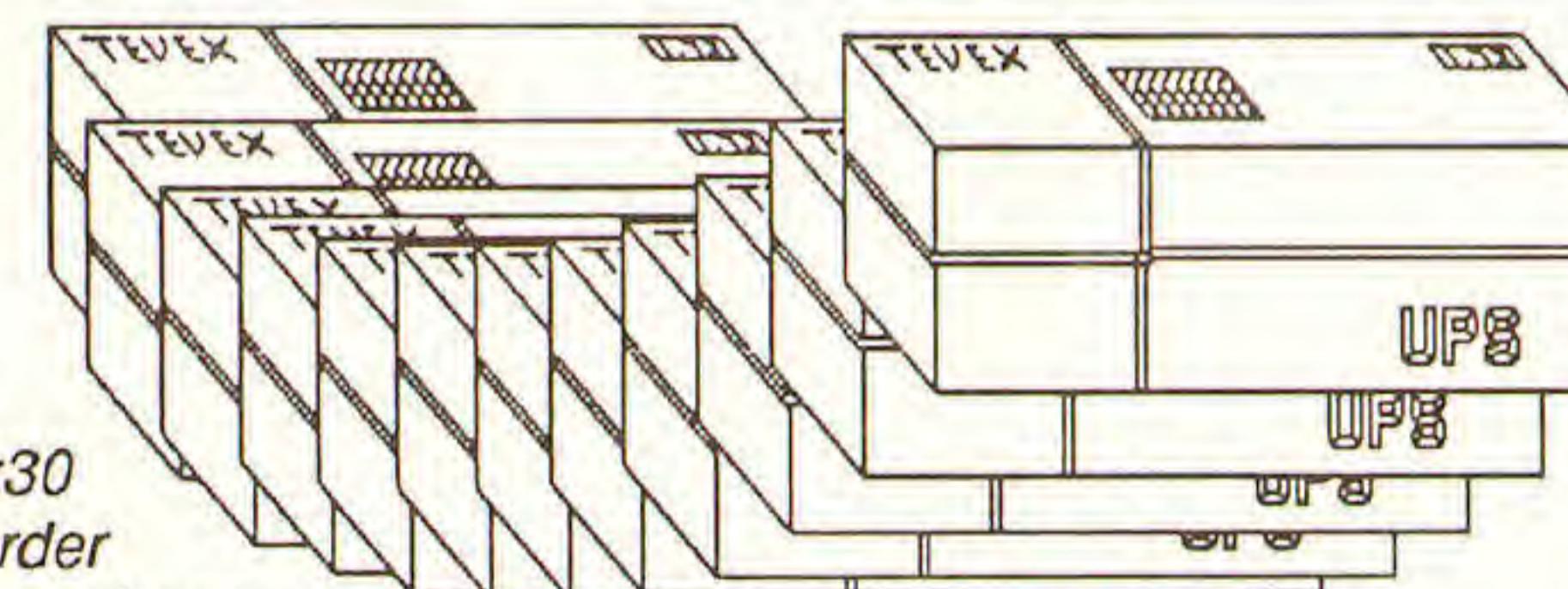
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Champ Baseball \$28	Defender Crown \$28	<i>Power at Sea</i> \$21	Pirates \$28	NBA \$28	Deep Space \$28
Chp. Basketball \$28	Gauntlet \$28	Spy/Spy I & II \$12	Silent Service \$24	Super Sunday \$24	Wizardry I \$34
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Her husband had become deathly ill, incapable of working or earning any money. He had virtually no insurance, and no income. What he did have was a mountain of unpaid bills, a huge mortgage payment, car payments, and a flock of loans to pay back from a small business that failed.

For awhile it looked like her only option was to sell the house and car and declare bankruptcy. Fortunately, she didn't have to do any of that. Instead, she took a deep breath and decided that it was time to become financially independent.

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One thing we want to emphasize - this will not be material put together by a bunch of amateurs or worse yet 'book worms' who know what should work, but have never done it. Instead it's put together by a staff that has started with nothing and have ended up as millionaires.

They'll be giving you the type of tips and insight into things that only experience can give. They'll tell you step-by-step how they regularly made hundreds of thousands of dollars.

I imagine by now you're worried that a program like this will cost you a small fortune. And it would at most places. You could end up paying thousands getting the same type of advice at private consultations with financial experts or hundreds going to seminars.

Quite frankly, our team of experts could make far more money doing business in that way but they've reached the point where money is no longer a goal.

We've tried it that way and it turned out we

game software is to present a gentle warning to the American computer game industry. There are foreign firms lurking in the weeds and preparing to invade. If American game companies become complacent, then our prediction is that they will follow the sad example of the auto industry. Any American firm that takes their customers for granted will pay the piper in later years. If you don't believe us — check the retail shelves and compare the number of Atari cartridges

Our general aim is to put you in the editor's chair as we chat with the various companies and reviewers. When we hear something interesting or funny — we'll pass it along. It's not designed to be a gossip column but we will pass along the good stuff.

compared to the number of Nintendo cartridges.

Doesn't the title say "Computer" games?

We apologize for the long digression into cartridge games. It's just that much of the news these days concerns these products. We can report a few scattered rumors about various pure computer games.

Microprose is being secretive but they will reportedly introduce three new titles at CES. One of them will be in the same format as the successful game **PIRATES**.

Cinemaware is working on a game with the same historical background as **NOBUNAGA'S AMBITION**. Cinemaware's tentative title is **LORD'S OF THE RISING SUN**. Both games involve the unification of Japan during the 16th Century, the same period covered in the **SHOGUN** novel. Also, **ROCKET RANGER** should absolutely be on your retailer's shelves by the time this magazine reaches you.

Electronic Arts will likely jump into the Nintendo market fairly soon. The likely first title will be **SKATE OR DIE**. It's a natural for

the cartridge format and we predict success.

We warned you that this column would tend to be relatively unstructured. Our general aim is to put you in the editor's chair as we chat with the various companies and reviewers. When we hear something interesting or funny — we'll pass it along. It's not designed to be a gossip column but we will pass along the good stuff. This part of the magazine is also open to readers. If you hear a particularly good story about a

new product or a fist-fight between two designers then we would enjoy knowing about it. We will do our best to confirm all stories but please keep in mind that we make no guarantees about the accuracy of any specific information within this column. When we tell you that **ZELDA II** will be available in October, please don't promise your child that he will get one on October 1st. That's what THEY tell us but WE can't make any promises.

Weasel, Weasel, Weasel

The views expressed here are those of the editor and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the magazine, the game companies mentioned, their employees, suppliers, children, family, friends, relatives, pets, spiritual advisors or anyone else in the universe. This means if you are planning a lawsuit based on any of the rumors mentioned in the column — you are limited to suing the poverty-stricken editor, not the fat-cat publisher. Also, any reproduction or rebroadcast of this game is strictly prohibited without the express, written permission of the National Football League.

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graphic (in the technical sense) product, as are all popular Japanese games. Koei asked us to make it clear that **Night Life** is a very old product, no longer available, and has no connection with any current Koei products.

Computer magazines

Europe and Japan are loaded with excellent computer game magazines. The color and graphics are spectacular and the magazines sell extremely well. The combined populations of England, France, Germany and Japan are only slightly higher than the USA. However, there are perhaps 25 large-circulation game magazines in these countries — compared to one here. You are reading the only large-circulation computer game magazine in the USA. We have no answer for this question.

So where are they?

If there are so many fantastic games being designed and sold in various foreign countries, why don't we ever see them? There are two possible answers. The first involves the monopolistic characteristics of software distribution in the USA. There are only about five major distributors of software here. If you produce a game and want to sell it nationwide — you either gain the support of one of the Big Five or else you remain a garage operation. It takes time to learn the intricate nature of American software distribution and we can only assume that foreign producers have yet to do so.

The second possible answer relates to laziness on the part of American companies. If they were to spend the time in Europe and Japan and learn more about the games, perhaps someone would have the courage to attempt imports. Our guess is that we will have to wait for the foreign market to come to us. Japan has already shown the potential with their Nintendo success, so others may not be far behind.

Is that a genuine Gucci?

Americans love imported products. Just check the trade deficit figures or look around. Unfortunately, much of this deficit has come in industries that were invented and dominated by American firms. American firms became complacent and assumed that the rest of the world would always choose to buy American televisions and autos. Now, they can't even assume that Americans will buy American products.

Part of our reason for going into such detail about the quality and quantity of foreign

West Coast Computer Faire

The 13th Faire was held at the Moscone Center in San Francisco, April 7th to April 10th. Jim Warren, a founding father of the Faire, chaired one of many panel discussions and sessions presented. He was an early member of the Homebrew Computer Club and joined with others to put on the first Faire in 1977. One of the first people to call and ask for the "front two booths, right in the center of the front entrance" was Steve Jobs who had just started a new company called Apple.

For many years, this was a gathering place for the home computer person and Apple had that booth right up front. Then in 1983, Jim Warren 'sold' the conference to Prentice-Hall and it is now the property of The Interface Group, which also puts on COMDEX. The perspective of the show has changed over the years since being sold, but record crowds continue to attend each year.

It still attracts the 'old' and famous names of personal computing's early days; Adam Osborne, George Morrow, Jerry Pournelle, Chris Crawford and many others. But Apple no longer has a booth. That spot near the front entrance is now occupied by IBM. The homebrewers are now replaced by a few home businesses, several clubs, and mostly by commercial business systems and major software companies.

We went there to see what new games were being shown at the Faire. However the business side of the show dominated, and but a few game companies were present.

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE and BRODERBUND both had fairly large booths and were showing many of their new titles. Each had just come from the Software Publishers Association award presentation the week earlier with award winning titles.

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE's winning title was FALCON, an F-16 fighter simulation for the Mac and IBM. It actually won several awards with its outstanding graphics and sounds. Other products being shown were PT-109, a torpedo boat simulation (Mac & IBM); Solitaire Royale, a collection of solitaire card games (Mac & IBM); Tetris, an addictive



abstract game from Russia (C64 & IBM); and Dondra, a fantasy graphic adventure (Apple).

BRODERBUND's winner title was JAM SESSION (Mac); a fun music program with animated graphics of the players for each instrument. This game lets 'anyone' play-along perfectly with the rest of the group. Other titles shown were WHERE IN EUROPE IS CARMEN SAN DIEGO?, the third in a series of mystery adventure games with great educational value (Apple & IBM); and WINGS OF FURY, a WWII fighter-bomber simulator and action game (Apple).

KOEI also had a fairly large booth. This company, with top selling software in Japan, is now releasing their top titles to the US market for the IBM computer. NOUNGA'S AMBITION is strategic game to unite the warring states of 16th century Japan. ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS, a similar game, takes place during the second Han dynasty in China. Also planned for release in the fall is a game based on the conquests of Genghis Khan.

KEYPUNCH was showing over 100 titles of budget priced software (\$5-10) for popular home computers. This software is sold by many large, mass market stores under the Keypunch and Box Office Software labels. Most packages contain several games with a similar theme (games, business, education, etc.). Titles such as \$100,000 PYRAMID, HIGH ROLLERS, and ALF are

based on the popular TV programs with the same name.

SCORPIO was showing CRAPS II, a tutorial craps program for the IBM and Mac. Featuring an on screen craps table, this program can be customized for the specific house rules of any casino. A great program for helping to understand the mysteries of this popular game of gambling.

Both GENIE and COMPUSERVE online national network services were present. They both have online gaming available. GENIE is just introducing a graphic flight simulator that uses special software for the Amiga, Atari ST, and Mac to accurately represent the flight characteristics of a several different types of planes from a WWI fighter to a B-52 bomber to a modern jet fighter. Up to 40 planes, representing three different countries can be interacting together in the same 'world'. These programs and their documentation can be downloaded for the standard connect charges.

In talking with representatives from the different companies, many said that they are planning for selected titles to be licensed and soon released as Nintendo game cartridges. The aisles and booths were crowded with people, but those interested in computer games had only a few booths to visit. The Faire is definitely becoming more business oriented each year as the fun and excitement of its origins moves on to other shows.

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The Play's the Thing

By Rusel Demaria



The *Bard's Tale* series has been a popular and challenging addition to the inventory of role-playing games. Interesting fact: though the series was originally called Tales of the Unknown — Volume 1 being called *The Bard's Tale* — people wanted to think of the series as *Bard's Tale*, and so it became. In the first two episodes, adventurers were required first to free the town of Scara Brae from the grip of the evil demon-spawn, Mangar, and, next, to assemble the seven scattered pieces of the Destiny Wand and defeat the evil Archmage, Lagoth Zanta.

In *Bard's Tale III*, the *Thief of Fate*, it becomes clear that the world is never safe for long. Now the Evil One, Tarjan himself, has returned to rain on your parade. He's a real nuisance and for the sake of life as we know it you must assemble a hearty band of adventurers, travel through seven dimensions and eventually defeat Tarjan head to head.

You can start from scratch in the *Thief of Fate*, but you'll have to build up some characters fast. This is not a friendly game. In fact, even if you bring your best archmages, monks, fighters, and other characters from earlier *Bard's Tale* adventures, or you choose to start with characters from *Wizardry* (I-III) or *Ultima* (I-IV), you'll find them just so effective beyond the normal dimension.

For beginners, and even for your transferred characters, there is a starter dungeon (the Mad God's dungeon) found within the ruined city of Scara Brae, and a single Old Man has taken the place of the former Review Board (which is where you can learn new spells, increase levels and learn important information). As with former episodes, there are still taverns where a Bard can wet his whistle and perhaps learn a thing or two, and

there can still be found temples, though some of the priests seem somewhat corrupt.

Places that are no more include Roscoe's Energy Emporium, Garth's Equipment Shoppe, and Bedder's Bank. Hard times require new solutions. Even the Adventurer's Guild, once a haven for your heroes, is now moved to the Refugee Camp, or in some relatively safe place in the sun. Hit points and spell points may also be recovered within mazes, if you can find the appropriate places.

More good news: You can save a game in progress anywhere. That's right, anywhere. No more slogging back to base to save the game. Also, you can pause the game if the phone rings or dinner is announced and your family doesn't take kindly to your absence. Oh, and there are



◀ 17

no cursed items in this game, though there are plenty of useless ones.

The Rogue character is the central character of this scenario, and his new abilities are especially handy. He has learned to identify unknown items. More importantly, he can now hide in the shadows and creep up on enemies from behind, delivering a fatal 'critical hit.' He also can identify trapped chests and disarm them.

There are two new magic classes as well. The *Chronomancer* is essential to reaching the other dimensions. Only a Chronomancer can cast the necessary spells. But a Chronomancer is not easy to come by—only a character who has mastered all the spells in three of the mage classes may become one, and, to add insult to injury, all former spells are forgotten.

The Chronomancer serves an additional function in the game—that of copy protection. Yes, even though there is no electronic copy protection, Bard's Tale III employs a clever scheme. Whenever you move to one of the alien dimensions, you

must use a special three-layered code wheel, matching three code words to reveal a secret number. Without the wheel, you can't travel to other dimensions. Interestingly, you can play through the first dungeon, create a Chronomancer and all, but as soon as you want to move to another dimension, you'll need the wheel. Actually, it's about as painless a copy protection as I can imagine—just don't lose the wheel or let your dog chew it up or your friends use it for a frisbee.

The other new magic user is the *Geomancer*, but you'll be well into the game before you can create one of those. Geomancers can cast some nifty spells (like a Trapzap for an entire level), but they lose some of their special fighting abilities. Only fighter types (and Bards) can become Geomancers, but at high enough levels and with the appropriate equipment, Geomancers remain effective fighters.

For those not already familiar with Bard's Tale, there are some features that should be mentioned. There are seven magic classes—Conjurer, Magician, Sor-

cer, Wizard, Archmage, Chronomancer, and Geomancer. There are seven levels of spells for each caster, and over 100 spells in all. It is possible to have a character who is an Archmage and has learned all the spells from the four other basic categories as well. By the way, there are a few spells that can only be learned under special conditions and there is one Bard song that is offered somewhere in the game. Look for some special items that can reduce the amount of spell points needed to cast. They aren't clearly marked, but some experimentation will reveal them, as well as various other useful objects here and there.

You can create new characters while in the Refugee Camp or assemble groups and save them under a special name. To see the stats on any member, press his or her number in the party order. Up to seven characters can be in one party, though you can go with fewer. When you view the character's stats, you see the current state of experience, gold, and other attributes. You also can view what items that character is carrying and drop, equip, or trade them to other characters. If the character is a spell caster, you'll next see a list of known spells. If the character has other special traits, like the Bard or the Rogue, you'll see the current status of those traits.

All movement is accomplished from the keyboard and you soon grow very familiar with the basic commands for fighting and moving around. You'll also learn quite a repertoire of strange sounding spells like TRZP, MIBL, GOFI, and NUKE. In fact, spell casting is quite an art and learning how and (more important) when to cast spells is part of the fun.

Graphically, Bard's Tale III is one of the best of the genre. Outdoor scenes are populated primarily with rocks, trees and various kinds of buildings. The city streets are well drawn, with buildings of all kinds lining your pathway. Indoor mazes are made up of walls, doors and occasional special objects, though there are several

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Proceed at Your Own Risk

By Nancy West

One day, many years ago (well, about 7 or 8) Werdna and Lord British got together and conspired to find a way to make me work. They designed a nearly perfect carrot-on-the-stick to place ahead of my progress, guiding me ever deeper into oblivion. What they designed were a pair of role-playing computer games — Wizardry and Ultima. By the time I had identified the spell they had cast, I was hooked.

Wizardry in particular had me so engrossed that my family was thinking about erecting a mausoleum around me. In fact, until I figured out how to back up my characters, I was a total captive whenever I was in the maze. Nothing could drag me away until I returned safely to the Castle.

As time passed (months of it), I learned the tricks of Wizardry, completed the adventure several times, and built an army of characters at the top of their classes. And so it began...

Role-playing games have several features in common. For one, they are all based, more or less, on the dungeons and dragons — swords and sorcery scenarios. They generally involve a small group of characters ranging from one, to as many as six or seven, who represent various types of beings. Humans, dwarves, elves, hobbits, and gnomes are common. In some games they can be male or female; good, neutral or evil. There are also various classes of characters like magicians, priests, fighters and others. In fact, looking over all the games, there have been an astounding variety of classes, including sorcerers, wizards, bards, thieves (or rogues), ninjas (monks), bishops, mages, archmages and on and on. Bard's Tale III introduces two new magic users, Chronomancers and Geomancers. Will it never end?



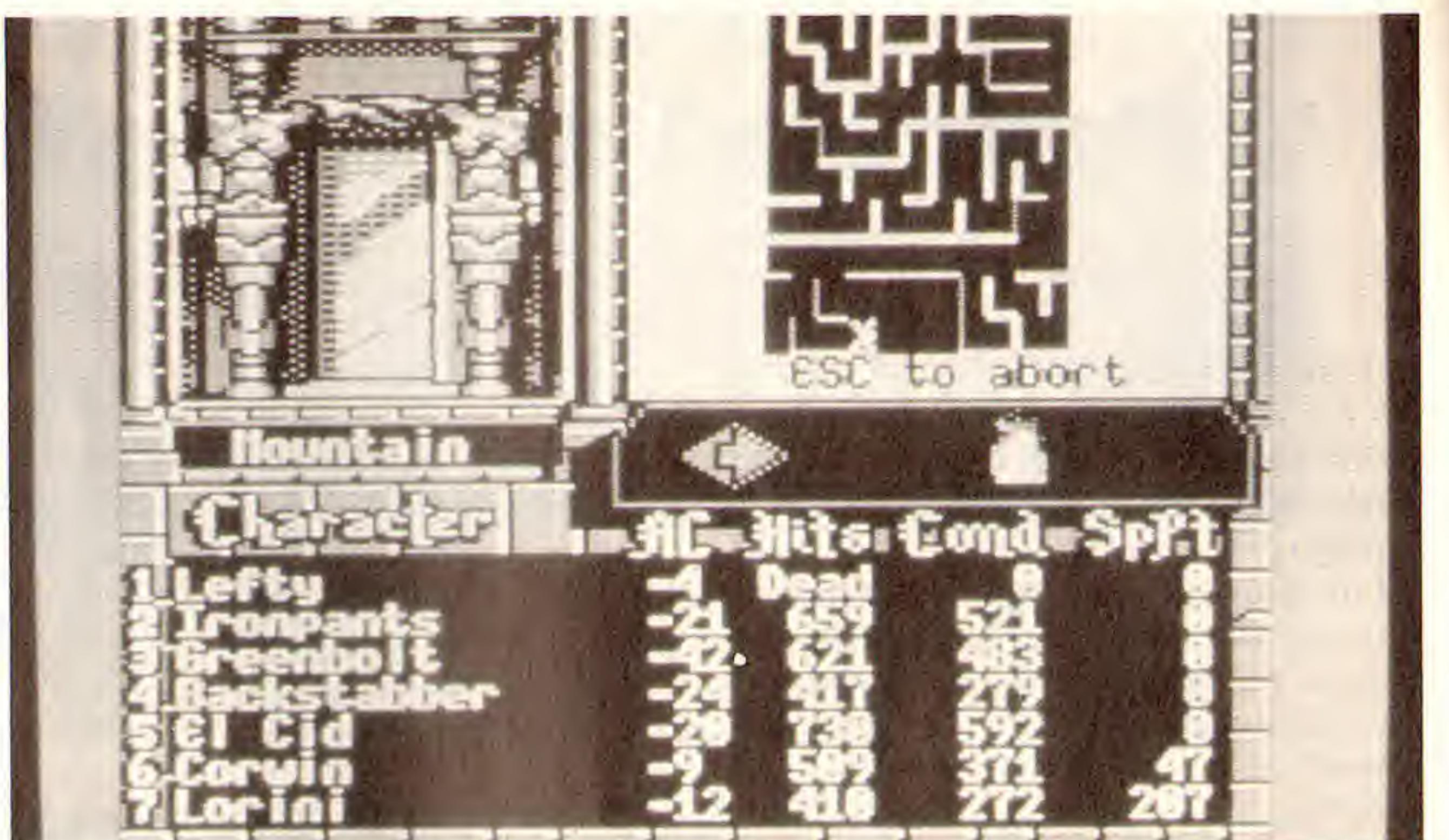
Without a map, you may forget where you found an important talking statue, a decapitation trap, or, worse, where the route out can be found.

The appeal of role playing games is at least threefold. First, there are always quests and sub-quests to keep you interested. Solving the puzzles and exploring the mazes is stimulating because you never know what the programmers' warped senses of humor will produce next.

Second, your characters are like your children. You raise them from weak, almost useless shadows of their potential, to powerful, almost unbeatable super-beings. It takes time and effort to accomplish such an intensive training program, but it is always interesting. Nothing is more thrilling than learning a new spell and using it to clear a path through a horde of attacking monsters. Or learning a beyond death spell that resurrects one of your band careless or unlucky enough to get himself killed (priests can usually resurrect the dead, but they charge an arm and a leg — well not literally, but you know what I mean). Also, the equipment your characters can purchase or find becomes more powerful as the character grows. Some items that can be found in the various dungeons and towers are powerful and mysterious in the extreme.

The third reason that these games can be so captivating is that, though there is endless violence in the form of battles with monsters and other entities, there is a good deal of strategy. You must determine the best way to vanquish your enemies and avoid disasters, and it isn't always through brute force or with the most immediately apparent spell. You survive longer as you learn to read the signs.

There's another reason that role-playing games are fun, and it has to do with



◀ 18 types of mazes. As always, the mazes and cities are traversed in a sort of "you are there" three dimensional perspective that lends a sense of immediacy to the experience (as opposed to the omniscient bird's-eye view of other games).

Then there are the monsters. Wherever you go, you'll meet monsters and other creatures — some friendly, most not. The monsters in Bard's Tale III are very nicely drawn, and contain some simple animation effects. Even though the program only requires 64K on an Apple II, it contains excellent graphics throughout. Also, as you move from dimension to dimension, new monsters appear — monsters that are appropriate to the dimension you're in. For instance, in Gelidia, a very cold place, Frost Giants and Ice Bears are common. In Kinestia, a mechanical world, you might even meet some odd-ball monsters like La Machines and toasters.

Defeating monsters gets increasingly difficult, not that it is easy at the beginning. As I said earlier, some of my most powerful characters from earlier Bard's Tale adventures were barely able to hold their own against some of the Mad God's minions, and were in real trouble in some of the more difficult dimensions. But patience wins out. I outlasted them, kept building characters, and even found a way to, dare I say it? Well, anyway, I found a way to increase my characters' experience quickly. You might discover the same method with a little luck and a devous mind.

Circle Reader Service Number 32

◀ 21 the way they are programmed. It is usually, though not always, possible to find a way to cheat. "Cheat?" you ask. Yes. Cheat. Well, all's fair in love and war, isn't it? Anyway, in many of the games there are shortcuts to glory, ways to copy useful items, or ways to increase a character's level quickly. I'm not talking about programs designed to change your characters — those are too easy. I'm talk-

ing about finding the hidden secret methods of the program. These are generally as fun to find as the answers to the riddles that generally pepper these adventures.

At any rate, role-playing is an apt name. Your characters are you. As they explore dark, dangerous places, using their wits and their power, they sacrificing their bodies and minds again and again, you accompany them, probing the three-dimensional walls of the mazes for clues,

Name: <i>BARD'S TALE III</i> (The Thief of Fate)	
Type: Role-playing Adventure	
Formats: Apple (reviewed), C64/128	
Publisher: Interplay Productions	
Distributor: Electronic Arts	
Designers: Stackpole/Fargo/Heineman	
Ages: 10 and above	
Players: One only	
Requirements: 64K (Apple)	
Price: \$49.95	
Ability Level:	Advanced
Packaging:	Excellent (9)
Documentation:	Excellent (9)
Graphics/Text:	Very Good (8)
Playability:	Excellent (10)
CP RATING:	9.25

stepping gingerly out into the seemingly endless unknown, braced for the next attack or the next message from the unseen denizens of the computer programming universe — and becoming stiff as a corpse spending hyour after hour exploring with only your keyboard and spellbooks as guides. For those who have played these games, you know what I'm talking about. For those who have not tried yet, beware. For some, it's addicting.

Twinkle, Twinkle

By Roy Wagner

The not particularly original premise of EbonStar is that the society of 3000 A.D. no longer has war to amuse itself. As a substitute source of violent excitement, combat games regularly are held in the EbonStar sector of the galaxy. There, star pilots soar across a futuristic grid trying to blast their competitors into an artificial black hole generated by a huge, rotating satellite. And just to insure that the best pilots don't go unchallenged, termination drones fly out of the black hole to challenge the best of the best.

Experts in arcade trivia will spot great bleeding chunks of Asteroids tucked into EbonStar's game design. Your tiny ships look like Asteroids' triangular fleet and they rotate and thrust like them as well.

By firing at the competition, you can bounce them into the gravitational attraction of the black hole. That black hole is a visual treat. The slowly circling satellite, considerably larger than any other object on the screen, sends a blast of energy into the visible space grid. At the center of the blast, the grid bends and glows red. The visual conception is excellent and vividly programmed.

Aside from that special effect, EbonStar offers little in the way of visual thrills. The play's the thing.

The gimmick in multi-player mode is the ability to play cooperatively or competitively. With computer-controlled opponents cruising the galaxy, two or more human players may choose simply to defeat the enemy together. It's a nice way for dad and the kids to play or for friends to enjoy a computer game.

The fun arrives when the disagreeable essence of human nature emerges and a formerly cooperative player suddenly decides to get competitive. Then, all EbonStar can break loose with players confronting one another on the screen and around the computer. With more than one human at the controls, EbonStar acquires that human to human appeal that is the main attraction of board games but so often missing in computer entertainments.

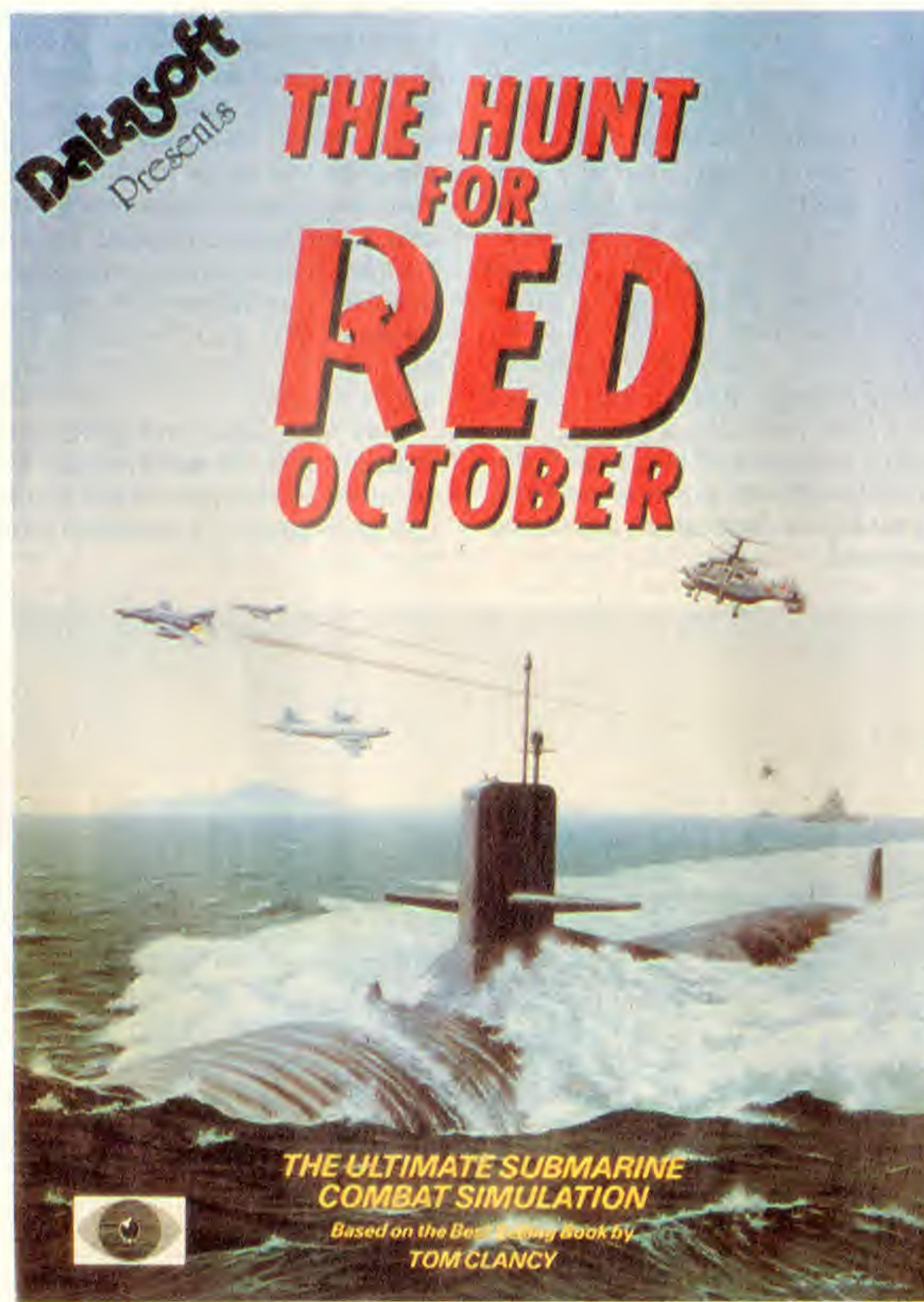
With four players, things do get a bit crowded around the terminal. A four-player setup puts players one and two in charge of mouse or joystick and positions

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Run Silent, Run Deep

By Bob Lindstrom



**THE ULTIMATE SUBMARINE
COMBAT SIMULATION**
Based on the Best Selling Book by
TOM CLANCY

The course between fun and frustration is navigated uneasily in *The Hunt for Red October* (HFRO), a Datasoft game based on the best-selling *Tom Clancy* novel. With a bit of masochistic persistence, however, players may well become engrossed in the non-combative scenario of this war strategy game.

With Clancy's novel as its firm foundation, HFRO has considerably more plot than the typical Maneuver-To-Kill war game. As in the book, the main character (the role you assume in the game) is a senior Soviet sub commander intent on defecting. Unfortunately for Soviet military security, you command the ultimate in Russian submarine technology: *Red October*.

With an extraordinarily quiet experimental drive system, the nuclear-powered *Red October* is virtually impossible to detect through conventional means. It is an underwater stealth vessel of the first order and a prize catch for the American navy... if you can successfully evade the Soviet navy and make contact with the USN.

To additionally complicate matters, your officers are co-conspirators in the defection but the crew remains uninformed of your intentions. No matter how intense the pursuit of Soviet trawlers and subs - all committed to destroying *Red October* rather than let it surrender to enemy hands - you must not diverge radically from the crew's fake orders. Any unusual behavior could raise crew suspicion and cause a mutiny.

As the commander and crew progress deeper into the deception, additional plot twists arise to complicate both the story and the computer action/strategy. Datasoft and Oxford Digital Enterprises, programmers of HFRO, ingeniously have integrated Clancy's plot into the framework of a strategy game. A later turn, for instance, requires disabling the nuclear power plant, which makes the sub more detectable to hostile forces and necessarily alters your evasive strategy. The plotting cleverly renews intrigue and difficulty throughout the game.

But plot and programmers frequently contribute excessive difficulty, particularly at the beginning of HFRO. The pursuit begins in the waters of the North Atlantic around craggy Reykjanes Ridge. The rocky ocean floor presents a wealth of canyon-like hiding places; but making the most of these mountainous forma-

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Computer Play

Fun on Your Own

By
Roy
Wagner

Remember back when you didn't have a computer and about the only solitaire games you could play were the ones that used a deck of playing cards. Then you got a computer and all kinds of other solitaire game playing became available. Well now things have gone full circle and several of the most popular card solitaire games are now available for the home computer.

SOLITAIRE ROYALE (by Brodie Lockard) from Spectrum HoloByte features eleven solitaire card games. Eight of these (Pyramid, Golf, Klondike, Canfield, Corners, Three Shuffles and a Draw, and Reno) offer entertainment and challenge for any adult. Three of them (Concentration, Pairs, and The Wish) are designed for young children.

The individual cards are presented with outstanding graphics. You may choose from ten different designs for the back of the cards. There are five different sets of card faces with some very novel images for the pictures cards. These are exceptionally well done in color for the IBM and Amiga. For the MAC, the monochrome display is nice. But with a card game that requires playing cards upon opposite "colors", it does require more mental effort to discern a spade from a diamond or heart than I expected.

The play of the cards is very easily done on computers with a mouse and somewhat more tediously done using cursor keys on systems without a mouse. The cards can be "grabbed and dragged" or simply selected (highlighted) and then moved by identifying their ending location. If a move is not valid, the cards will



be returned to their starting location. In some cases, a message will be displayed indicating the reason that the action was invalid.

The documentation is excellent. It explains a bit of the history of card solitaire games, gives loading instructions, general play rules and common terms, and details for the play of each game with a layout illustration. A detailed explanation is given for each menu option. An addi-

tional reading list on games of solitaire is even provided.

A score is provided for each game. Two special play options, Tour and Tournament, extend the challenge of single game play to that of true competition with a high score board saved for each game. The object of the Tour is to play all eight "adult" solitaire games. Each game is played once for a score and then play

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Premier Issue

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tions demands excellent navigational skills. The opening game becomes a frustrating and discouraging succession of crashes and military defeats as you acquire those navigational skills.

What's more, the programmers seem to have cheated on the relative speed of vessels. Though Red October can soar through the ocean at a brisk 15 knots, it generally is unable to evade surface vessels that are moving, according to your sonar information, at 10 knots or less. This adjusted sense of realism stands as a serious fault in the game execution.

Fortunately, once you successfully make your way to the open sea, a Save Game feature permits the luxury of starting up again from the point of a successful escape. The success is only temporary, though, since the following episodes of the story come equipped with their own distinctive challenges. The drama isn't over until Red October is safely transported to American waters.

While the early strategic aspects of HFRO may be severe, few problems are created by the intelligently designed interface. With mouse/menu-equipped computers such as the Atari ST and Commodore Amiga, commanding your sub is as logical as clicking on icons - representing sonar, engine room, weapons - and choosing from several visual aids including sonar and topographical maps, or optical or infrared periscope. In other computers, the interface is controlled by keyboard or joystick and is just as simple to use.

For maximum speed and accuracy in navigation, two different techniques are provided for issuing orders. The commander can click in visual displays of depth and heading for instant response (allowing for a realistic lag time to execute those orders), then move to a second command screen that permits precise settings of speed, depth and heading.

What can be a problem is the weapons system. Like the evasive procedures of the opening game, effective command of the torpedoes requires lots of practice, both in automatic and manual aiming mode. Plan on many, many defeats because your computerized pursuers have far superior weaponry skills.

Even so, it is best to avoid combat. Use of torpedoes will reveal your location. And you don't want to run the chance of accidentally destroying a NATO vessel. One military move, even unintentional, against US or NATO ships and the US will

The Hunt for Red October



conclude that your defection was a cover story in order to infiltrate US waters. Then, it's Look Out, Ivan!

HFRO tends to stack the deck against the human player. While the odds may be an essential part of the situation garnered from Clancy's book, it also leads to a high degree of aggravation and defeat while acquiring the skills needed to survive. However, HFRO's game interface does represent a step forward in the control of submarine simulations. A quick browse through the 40-page manual will put most commanders confidently in control.

Graphically, the 16-bit computer versions of HFRO are rather impressive. Topographical maps clearly provide detailed information on ocean-going geography and an inset sonar screen depicts the sub moving through the shadowy angles of underwater land forms. Icons actually look like the options they represent, such as the Nuclear Power, Diesel Power, Caterpillar Drive and Propeller Drive options of the Engine Room.

The C64/128 version offers much less clarity. In fact, most of the display looks like a muddled port from the 16-bit versions. As a result, icons are uncertain in detail, murky in their intentions. Only by memorizing the locations and types of controls will you be able to consistently decipher the meaning of the icons. A few other graphic compromises make the C64/128 version less desirable than HFRO on the higher-powered machines. In most situations, though, the play value is comparable (and comparably difficult) regardless of the computer involved.

A story and game design that empha-

sizes evasion over confrontation gives HFRO a singular feel among strategic war games. Combine that with the immediacy of near realtime action and you have a war game that will appeal even to those who wouldn't venture near one of Strategic Simulations' military marathons.

What will discourage a wide audience of players is the punishing challenge of the first part of the game. After being blasted, sunk, scuttled, crashed and obliterated for the umpteenth time, many surrogate sub commanders won't care if Red October ever sails into New York harbor.

Circle Reader Service Number 34

Name: THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER

Type: Strategy

Formats: Amiga, C64, IBM, Atari ST

Publisher: Datasoft

Distributor: Electronic Arts

Designer: Peter Sleeman

Ages: 10 to adult

Players: One only

Requirements: 512K IBM

Price: \$49.95

Ability Level:

Advanced

Packaging:

Very Good (7)

Documentation:

Average (6)

Graphics/Text:

Very Good (8)

Realism:

Fair (3)

Playability:

Fair (3)

CP RATING:

4.47

Just the Facts Please

By Nancy West

The blue Cadillac with the suspected felon screeches to a halt in front of a downtown grocery store. Following police procedure, you grab the car radio and call dispatch for a back-up unit. "Dispatch, this is 83-32. Request back-up Code-3!" "Be advised, 83-31 is responding Code-3 to your location."

Within seconds, the back-up unit has arrived and is in place. You load and draw your gun, and call for the felon to get out of the car. Suddenly, he opens the door, jumps out, and starts heading right for you. "HALT AND PUT YOUR HANDS UP!" The felon, smirking, watches carefully. The next move is yours. What do you do?

Are you tired of slaying dragons, searching for enchanted crystals and trying to unlock magic boxes of treasure with secret spells and a bit of luck? Are you ready for a little true-to-life adventure? Then *POLICE QUEST*: "In Pursuit of the Death Angel" just might be the game for you.

The setting is a typical small town in America, called Lytton, facing a sudden crime wave of drugs, robbery and murder. The leader of the local ring is code-named Death Angel, but no one has yet made contact with him or confirmed his true identity.

You're an ordinary police officer on the beat named Sonny Bonds, commissioned to patrol Lytton and protect the citizens from traffic violators and other no-good criminals. Being a cop isn't all adventure and shoot-outs. Just like a real officer, you must deal with untangling bureaucratic red tape, boring but necessary briefings, and uncovering concrete evidence to make sure the guilty land in jail and stay there.

POLICE QUEST is a 3-D animated adventure game, meaning a combination of

ply shoot first and ask questions later, with reckless regard for standard police procedure, the game will slap your wrist and make you start over again. Through hard work and perseverance, you can go from stopping traffic violators to a chance at undercover narcotics work, where you're hot on the trail of the Death Angel himself.

Designed by an ex-police officer who served 15 years as a California Highway Patrolman, *POLICE QUEST* steers clear of television show "shoot-em-up" gun fights

HALT AND PUT YOUR HANDS UP!

and car chases in favor of a more realistic portrayal of police work. There are times when you simply wait for something to happen, either patrolling the city in your car or staking out a park for a potential drug bust. You exchange off-color jokes with your buddies in the locker room, and share birthday parties at a local watering hole. What seems like a routine police call could quickly accelerate into a dangerous situation, where all your mental ability and knowledge of police procedure is put to use.

POLICE QUEST is a 3-D animated adventure game, meaning a combination of

text and graphics are used. Characters can move behind, in front of, and around objects. The graphics are excellent. While driving, you're on a map of Lytton, with four highways and over one hundred city streets to patrol. There are several different locations you have to visit to finish the game, including the local coffee house, a ritzy hotel, a court room, a low-life tavern and the police off-duty bar. Each one has its own distinct personality and local characters, adding interest and authenticity to the game.

POLICE QUEST includes your official Lytton Police Department "Policeman's Indoctrination Guide" (P.I.G. for short). You must read this carefully and refer to it often during the game, to make sure you're following the appropriate police procedures to the letter! The P.I.G. includes valuable information on correct traffic stop and felon arrest procedures, proper police attire, and the radio and vehicle codes you'll need to understand radio transmissions from headquarters. Although you need to know the codes to play the game, *POLICE QUEST* doesn't recognize the codes when you use them. For instance, you arrest a suspect on PC11351.5 (Possession or Purchase of Cocaine). When the jailer asks you what the charges are, he won't accept the number or title of the penal code or the word "possession" as an answer, but will book the criminal when you type "drugs."

You can make small mistakes in *POLICE QUEST* and receive fewer points but continue to play. However, there are several concrete rules from the P.I.G. manual that must be followed. If you make BIG mistakes by not following these rules...well,

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Warriors of Destiny



By Margo Comstock

The fifth incarnation of the adventures of Lord British takes giant leaps beyond that of Ultima IV, which took giant leaps beyond Ultima III, which took giant leaps beyond Ultima II, ditto Ultima, ditto Akalabeth, written the summer after Lord British's graduation from high school. And in this progression much is revealed. You can see the development of a young man with a fine mind from callow youth to thoughtful, concerned adult; and of an industry from crude, brute force brilliance to refined professionalism rich in content and detail. In the case of the Ultima series, the brilliance is still there.

With Ultima IV, Richard Garriott revealed the man of deep, strong values he

was becoming, and that game became the first true morality play in computerdom. By Ultima V, Garriott has recognized the unfortunate propensity of idealism to butt up against hard reality; so now, players must defend their heroic morality against difficult grays as well as evil blacks, they must learn to acknowledge temptations and still spurn them, to recognize the diabolical and use it against itself.

The Call To Britannia

As Ultima V begins, Lord British, ruler of Britannia, is missing. No longer can hardworn adventurers struggle back to Lord British's castle for healing and prom-

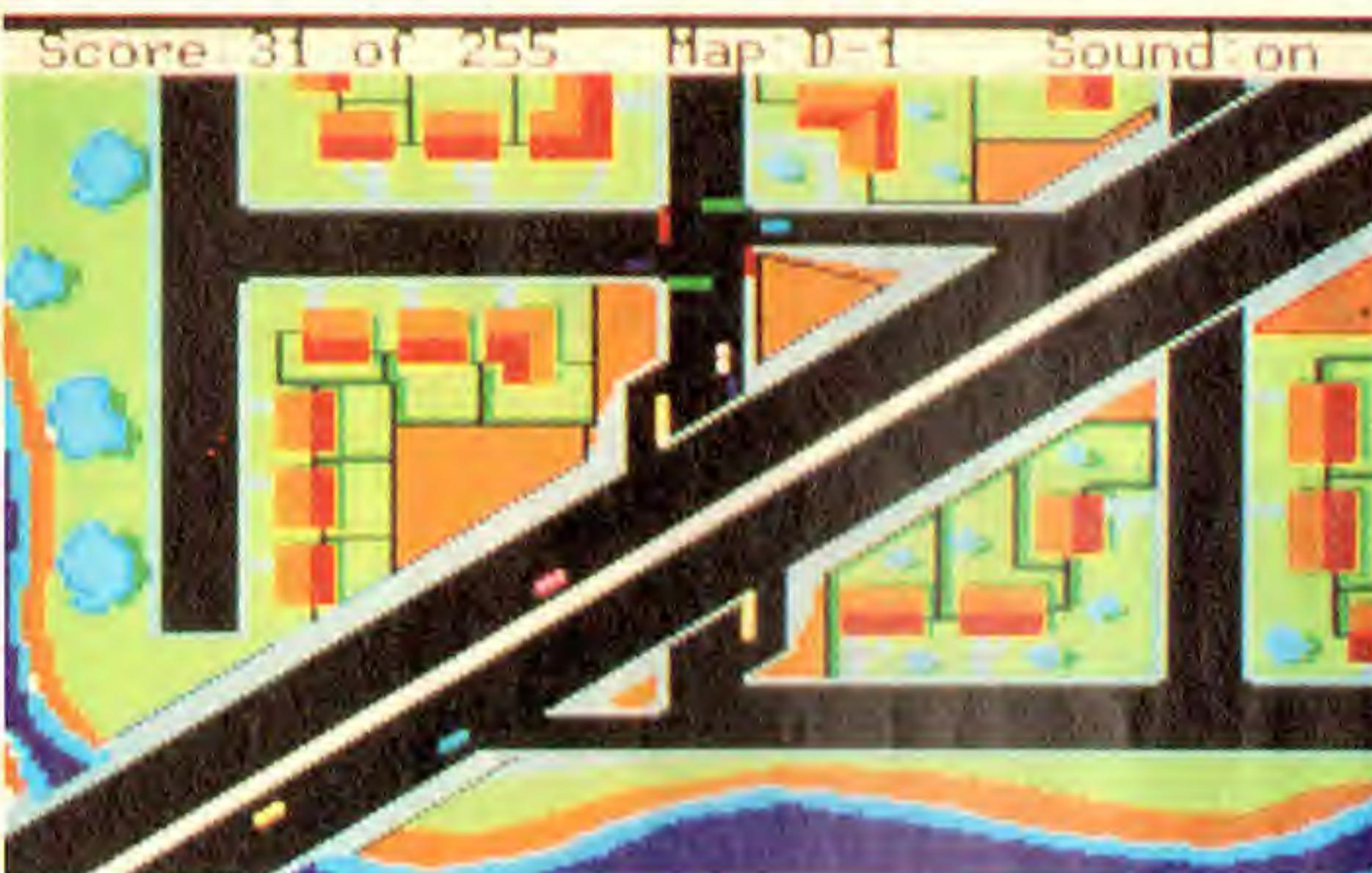
otion, for solace and increased hit points, for Lord British has been lost while on a patriotic expedition.

A few die-hard Brits cling to the conviction that their leader is still alive and will return. And so an underground develops. Old friends (of Ultima players) and veterans of Ultima IV—Iolo and Shamin—put out the call for the heroes of the Age of the Avatar to rally in the search for Lord British and the restoration of the benevolent monarch to his rightful throne.

We Don't Need Another Hero

In Ultima IV, the object was a knightly quest for avatarhood, which meant devel-

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◀ 30

let's just say you should save the game as often as possible. I liked the ability to approach a situation in several different ways. Multiple solutions mean POLICE QUEST can be played again to try and get the maximum number of possible points.

A map of Lytton and a reference card for function key shortcuts are also included. The shortcuts are real timesavers, allowing you to quickly load and draw weapons, turn on red lights and sirens for emergencies, or jump in and out of the car. Using the ESCape key while playing also lets you adjust various options, such as turning sound on and off or changing the speed of the character's movements.

In an interesting twist, there is a police computer in the game you can use to gather information about your suspects. It also understands and responds to almost any anatomical reference or four letter word with a very precise biological definition.

You also have a chance to play a game within a game, by playing poker while you're working undercover at a local hotel. The poker game was excellent fun by itself. I kept restoring that section of the game and playing poker over and over again!

Sierra recommends using an Enhanced Graphics Adapter with a color monitor to get the full effect of the colors and detail. If you play POLICE QUEST on a mono-

chrome monitor, there are a few sections where you need to pay close attention. At one point, I was supposed to be on the lookout for a blue Cadillac, but it was difficult to tell which car passing me was blue.

Characters are moved from place to place using the cursor keyboard or joystick. When you want to closely examine an object or take a piece of evidence, hitting any of the letter keys produces a convenient pop-up screen where you can type the appropriate text, such as "Take the radio," "Have a nice day," or "Put your hands up!"

There are three different speeds available by typing the commands: slow, normal, or fast. I found slow to be best for learning to drive and trying to park the car. The game is very unforgiving if a patrol officer forgets basic traffic safety procedures! You must simply restore the last saved position if you accidentally hit another car, run into a wall, or even run a yellow light (unless it's an Emergency Code 3 situation, of course). This helps add to the realism.

The puzzles in POLICE QUEST are not incredibly difficult to figure out, although



they are challenging. I started the game by rushing around trying to find out what I needed to do, and examining different locations for useful objects. I soon found out the game basically told me where to go and at what time. The radio dispatcher would either tell me to go to a certain location, or someone would walk up and tell me to go back to the station or take the evidence to the courthouse. Of course, it was up to me to solve the puzzle once I got there, but there are few places in the game where you're really on your own in trying to figure out what to do next.

One feature I especially like is the ability to store saved positions without the DOS file naming restrictions. Instead of having to type PQCAR1.SAV and then writing down exactly what's going on in that part of the game, you can type "Just stopped red sports car." 12 different game locations can be saved per directory, although you can create as many different directories as you wish. When you go to restore, the last saved position is shown as the default position. I wish more games gave you the option of naming and viewing your saved positions right on screen, instead of having to shuffle through notes trying to remember where you were before!

I did have a few minor problems with POLICE QUEST. There were sections

where the game seemed confused about what was taking place, and responded strangely. For instance, during a drug bust, one of the criminals began to shoot at me. I said "Halt! Put your hands up!" and the game responded "You've got him under control. Just cuff him." Obviously, this wasn't the case, since the criminal shot and killed me seconds later. When my narcotics partner jumped into the car and we went racing to the scene of a crime, I tried to question her and the game responded, "There's no one nearby." Once, after leaving a group of undercover officers, I thought I forgot something and returned. Although they were still standing there, when I tried to talk to them the game insisted that there was nobody there to talk to!

POLICE QUEST rudely kicked me out into DOS twice without warning, after quickly flashing the screen "No Memory - Want 495 - Have 356." I wasn't running any RAM Resident utilities, and after rebooting the game I continued without any problem.

The actual vocabulary seemed stilted at times. For instance, after telling me "Holster your weapon first," the game responded to the commands "holster the weapon," "holster weapon," and "holster gun" by saying "How can you do that?" The response it understood was "put gun away."

The game also has racist and sexist overtones, although the argument could be made that this is a realistic depiction. I don't agree. For example, the black janitor in the policemen's locker room is a shuffling Uncle Tom stereotype, right down to the fragmented English, as in using words like crawlin', slinkin' and lookin'. He says, "Sho' would be nice..." "Sonny, you been swipin' dope from the lock up, or are you tryin' to walk ove' me just 'cause you wants to?" and "Woooo wheeee! Lookeee whats we gots here!" However, none of the criminals, who mainly have Hispanic names, talk in bad or fragmented English. We should be able to assume that "real" criminals probably



wouldn't have an excellent command of the English language.

Sierra On-line now has an excellent bulletin board service, so you can leave messages for technical and customer service representatives or exchange messages and hints with other players. The

Name: POLICE QUEST
In Pursuit of the Death Angel
Type: Adventure
Format: IBM
Publisher: Sierra On-Line
Designer: Jim Walls
Ages: 13 and Above (PG-13)
of Players: One only
Requirements: 256K RAM
Price: \$49.95

Ability Level:	Intermediate
Packaging:	Very Good (8)
Documentation:	Very Good (8)
Graphics/Text:	Very Good (8)
Playability:	Excellent (9)

CP RATING: 8.50

Circle Reader Service Number 31.

only cost is a long-distance call. A hint book is available by calling customer service, or you can get a maximum of two hints per call over the phone if you just need a gentle nudge in the right direction.

POLICE QUEST ships on three 5-inch floppies and two 3 inch floppies. Sierra On-line is making POLICE QUEST one of the first of its games to ship without copy protection. If the experiment is successful, Sierra On-line will be shipping more games without copy protection. Bravo!

Overall, I thought POLICE QUEST was an absorbing, interesting, exciting game. Due to the violence, sex, and other adult situations (Sonny's girlfriend is a "working girl" in the oldest profession), I wouldn't recommend this for younger children. But I loved getting caught up in the action, my heart pumping and adrenalin rushing as I chased criminals and outsmarted drug dealers and their cronies. It's that element of getting involved that is the mark of an excellent game, and POLICE QUEST definitely passed with flying colors.

So strap on your holster and get ready to roll. And remember...be careful out there!

See Accompanying Article
on Page 37.



he institutes the avatar's virtues as laws: instead of its being moral to be generous, now it is illegal not to be. Instead of being honest by virtue, one must be honest for fear of losing one's tongue. Immediately, there is trouble: where virtue is legislated, there must arise a force of people to administrate it; their interpretation soon determines what is honest, what is generous, what is courageous.

Silent Resistance

The achievement of perfection in all eight virtues was called avatarhood, and only with its achievement — and the player's endurance of four hours' battling to achieve the bottom of the Great Stygian Abyss and destroy the ultimate source of evil in the universe — could Ultima IV be won.

Blackthorn was one of the great ones to achieve avatarhood. But in Ultima V, having taken up the reins of government in Lord British's absence, he has gone wrong. He has not turned against his morality; he has misinterpreted it. And in his fear of the worthlessness of lesser people, he has missed its point.

Rising to power as evil forces recognize their stake in his errors and rally to his aid,

of the underground note that more poor people will be available for care if their businesses are taken from them, or at least their profits; that disease will rage where anxiety and dis-ease is doled out by the government; and that many more criminals will be available for capture where many aspects of normal life are made illegal.

Name of the Game

Ultima V is a fantasy role-playing game of the surface-view genre. Although it has an extensive system of three-dimensional hero's view dungeons, the normal areas of play, the world of Britannia and its towns and villages, are displayed from a bird's-eye view, with people, including the player's representative(s), indicated by small icons of creatures. From Ultima III on, these icons are amusingly animated.

Outdoor terrain is represented by easily recognizable graphic symbols, and towns, villages, castles, docks, light-houses, and signposts are clear icons. The look is American primitive, and, like the art of that genre, it is polished, charming, and unexpectedly believable. Inside towns, villages, castles, and other com-

munities, the view is similar, but the scale is partially different. Buildings are full areas divided into rooms to be entered and explored; they contain furniture, oddments, people. Yet terrain features — trees, mountains, swamp — are exactly the same as outdoors. Somehow it works.

Only the dungeons suffer. For some reason, despite varied walls, interesting monsters, and surprises, Ultima dungeons fare poorly compared to the all-consuming dungeons of the Wizardry type games. Perhaps it is merely the contrast between dungeons and the colorful, more expansive world of the rest of Ultima, for no aspect of the dungeons can be singled out as lacking. In fact, Garriott's use of significant dungeon rooms that revert to the town-view style for special events and combat is excellent.

Knighthood In Flower

Ultima V's combat system shows great improvement over Ultima IV's, which shows great im...— well, we already did that, but it applies here too. Encountering a hostile group causes the screen immediately to move in close up on the battle site. The hostile group's forces are deployed at one end of the field (which may be woods, swamp, whatever reflects the terrain you're on), the player's people at the other end. Each character moves in turn according to his speed. New this time out is a crosshair that allows aiming in any direction, up to the distance al-

lowed by the weapon at hand. Once aimed, a character's crosshair begins each turn on the villain aimed at last time, unless that creature has expired in the meantime — a great play speeder. Once victory has been won, the player's characters can search slain brigands, do minor healing and detoxification, and generally clean up the area before moving on back to the surface view.

Expanding Universe

The Ultima's are famous for their distinctive, colorful block graphics. In Ultima V, the blocks, however, begin to lose their identity. Shorelines dip and weave in normal fashion, roads curve. Far more realistic-looking than before, the graphics are a masterpiece of innovation. Analyzed, in some ways they are even less realistic — but the illusion appears far more natural.

Within communities, small details delight. Grandfather clocks tell the actual game time with working hands and tiny pendulums swinging; on the hour, they chime the correct time. Mirrors reflect — send your character up to one to see. Desks and tables can be sat at and talked across, and small objects like chairs and barrels can be pushed or pulled aside.

Interaction with NPCs (nonplayer characters) is also improved in Ultima V.



Characters have distinct personalities and converse on several subjects; their comments may or may not be plot related. But the neatest new thing about the non-player characters is that they live independent lives. They move around and go about their days regardless of where the player characters are or what they're doing. Only if the player characters approach them do they alter their routines to respond.

Some characters respond without being approached; they respond to the proximity of the player character. These characters, however, are frequently up to no good.

Ten Hours a Dollar

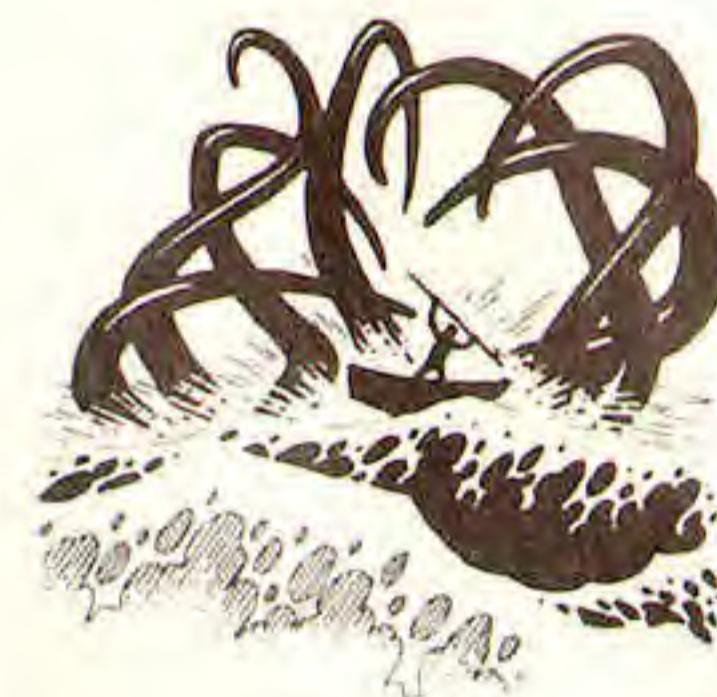
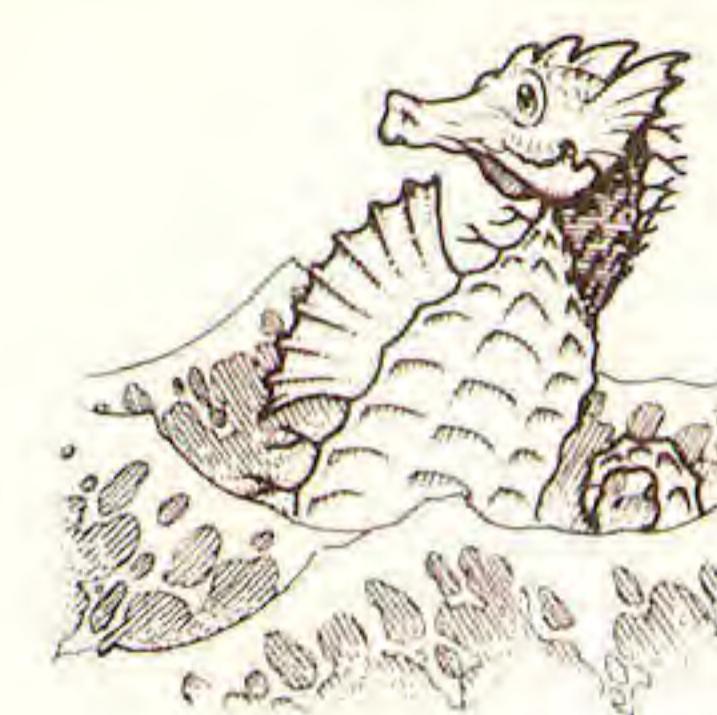
Ultima is adventure, role-playing, fantasy, sci-fi, mystery, and morality play rolled into one. Ultima V places the player in a colorful, extensive universe that is to be mastered and in the midst of a human mystery to be solved. In the process of winning, the player must examine the realm of human values, learn to distinguish the evil from the mistaken, overcome a lot of amoral monsters, out-think some truly diabolical villains, and use a wealth of imagination.

How Realistic is Police Quest?

By Nancy West

Origins

Hundreds of hours of challenging and fascinating gaming are packed in the Ultima V box. If the prospect daunts you, well, probably you never read *Les Misérables*, *Gone with the Wind*, or *Atlas Shrugged*, either.



Today, the Future

Now 26, Garriott divides much of his spare time between Encore, a company he founded with brother Robert, dad Owen, and a handful of other astronauts, and the medieval swashbuckling of SCA outings.

His interest in space is profound, as is the benevolence evident even in his games, and it was these qualities that led last January to Garriott's being the first recipient of the Dick Scobie Space Science Education Award from the Challenger Center.

Challenger Center was looking for a way to memorialize the Challenger crew while educating young people about space. They were considering the creation of a hands-on museum. As an alternative, Garriott designed and developed a plan for a space-life simulator that could travel to schools throughout the country; each visit would culminate in a schoolwide simulated space flight. His idea was enthusiastically adopted, hence the award.

To put some perspective on this honor, the Challenger Center, founded by the families of the lost Challenger astronauts, gives one award for each astronaut on Challenger; one of Garriott's co-recipients in January was George Bush.

Circle Reader Service Number 45.
Copyright 1988 by Margot Comstock Tommervik.

Name: **ULTIMA V**
Warriors of Destiny
Type: Fantasy/Adventure
Formats: Apple
Publisher: Origin Systems
Distributor: Broderbund
Designer: Lord British
Ages: 12 to adult
Players: One
Price: \$59.95

Ability Level: Advanced
Packaging: Excellent (10)
Documentation: Excellent (9)
Graphics/Text: Very Good (8)
Playability: Excellent (10)

CP RATING: 9.25

To find out, I talked with Officer Jerry Steele (a pseudonym), a 13-year veteran of police work in a mid-sized city on the West Coast. Officer Steele has experience in such diverse departments as Patrol, Vice/Narcotics, Sex Crimes, Burglary and Crime Analysis, and has also worked on undercover operations. He had seen *POLICE QUEST* before and I ran through different specific scenarios with him to get his reactions.

"This game is pretty realistic," said Steele, watching the screen as Sonny Bonds, the police officer, waited for backup to arrive during a felony traffic stop. "Most of my points are very technical. It would be like faulting a game about surgery because the doctor didn't have every little thing right. After all, it's not a training film, it's a game."

Sonny loaded his gun and pointed it at the suspect. "Why does he have to load his gun? All guns would be loaded before you'd go anywhere," said Steele. The man was ordered out

of the car, and he opened his car door and began walking toward the police. "Now before we'd have done that procedure, I would have had him throw the car keys out the window, so he couldn't get back in and drive off," he said.

When the officer went to the man to handcuff him, Steele noted, "That's totally unacceptable. They used to do felony stops that way a long time ago. We would have had him walk backwards, and lie down facing away from the police cars. Otherwise the suspect can see everything the officer is doing." He also said the car would have been searched for other suspects before this point.

We looked at the scene where one of the officers played a practical joke on his boss. Steele laughed and said, "Yes, that happens. The best one I can remember was when someone took black camouflage paint, like the S.W.A.T team uses, and replaced it with black shoe polish. And that doesn't come off!"

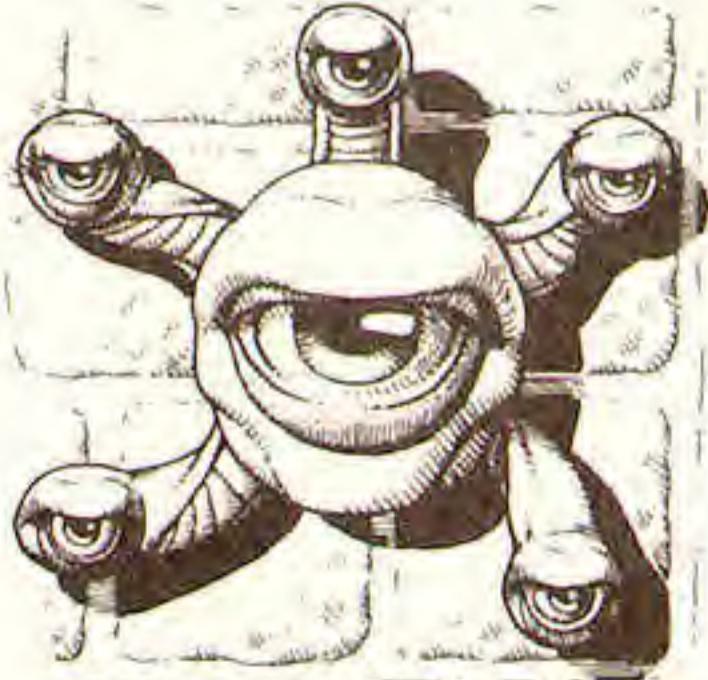
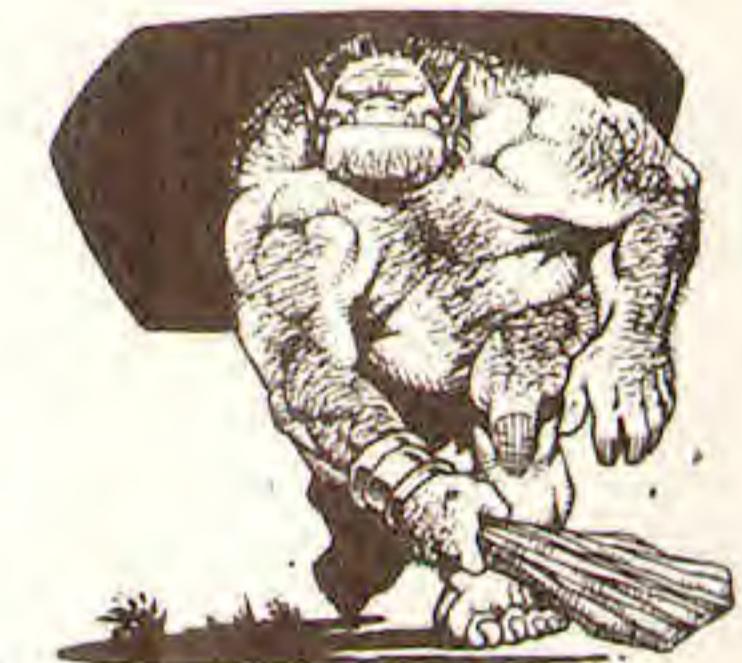
Sonny stopped an attractive brunette in a sports car for running a red light, and Steele said writing a ticket in front of the violator is something he wouldn't do; it makes them angry, and it doesn't allow you any safety to observe them. If you're in front of the door, the driver can just open the door and shove you into an oncoming car. He prefers to write the ticket in the police car, where he can keep an eye on the suspect.

The brunette bats her eyes and tries to weasel out of the ticket. Steele said, "Oh, yes, that's happened. They're very nice. 'Oh, yes, that's happened.' They're very nice as long as they don't get a ticket. When you deliver the ticket, then they get very obnoxious." Sure enough, the brunette let out a string of expletives when Sonny wrote up the ticket.

I thanked Officer Steele for his time, and left the station. On my way home, a radio station played the theme from *Hill Street Blues*. I thought it was appropriate.



Hundreds of hours of challenging and fascinating gaming are packed in the Ultima V box. If the prospect daunts you, well, probably you never read *Les Misérables*, *Gone with the Wind*, or *Atlas Shrugged*, either.



continues with the next game. A high score list for each game is maintained, as well as one listing the total scores for the top five players. These score lists can be cleared by a selected menu option.

With Tournament play, each player uses the same deal. An individual game or a Tour can be played. The deal for a particular tournament can be SAVED to disk for play at another time. Saving any deal that can be successfully won is an excellent thing to do. That way other players can use that deal knowing that they can also win. A display lists the top scores for each game in a Tour, listing both your high score as well as the highest score by any player. The high scores for the top five players using the same deal can be displayed for each individual game. Every separate deal saved to disk has its own top scores associated with it.

General play options include SAVE and SAVE AS to save any game in progress and OPEN to resume playing a game started at another time. A Help Menu lets you restart the current game, backup a move, and peek into a pile. These options are not available during Tour or Tournament play. You can also identify what a particular pile of cards represents, get an introduction to the basic game conventions, and an overview of the general rules from the Help Menu. On the Setting Menu you can toggle (on or off) various general performance characteristics. These include the display of error messages, game sounds, fast dealing, left-handed cursor,

and the dragging cards. Deck selection and the clearing high scores are also on this menu.

Now that you know that the game is well designed and documented, you would probably like to know how it plays. The play of the game is certainly the reason you bought it. On a computer that uses a mouse, play is easy, quick, and fun. Card solitaire was never so clean and pure. No need to find a card deck with 52 cards and a surface on which to deal and display them. Pure, in the sense of unadulterated, are the rules of each game enforced by the computer. Except for "peeking" at cards, no cheating is allowed. If you win, you win fairly and legitimately.

The games for children are easy, as they should be, requiring only the simple skills of memory and pair matching. Matching is done only by card value and does not require color matching. Two of the three require luck, the major element of nearly all solitaire card games.

The games for adults offer good variety. Some are quite easy requiring only pairing by point values equaling 13, others requiring much more mental strategy and calculated foundation building. Luck really plays a major role in any win. And here is where this game really provides a plus over its non-computer version. As mentioned above saved games can be used. You or any other player can face the challenge knowing that fate need not be the one smiling at the end of the game.

Playing with saved games is also useful for introducing children to these more challenging games of solitaire. Using the

computer to introduce children to these games is also better because they will learn to play them according to the rules. After all, times still do come up when we all find ourselves somewhere with no computer and "nothing" to do. A deck or two of cards and knowing how to play a few games of solitaire can sure come in handy.

So there we have it, Solitaire Royale is a game with lots of variety that can be both entertaining and educational. A game that is one of the best deals around. Circle Reader Service Number 46.

Name: SOLITAIRE ROYALE
Type: Traditional
Format: IBM, Mac
Publisher: Spectrum Holobyte
Designer: Brodie Lockard
Ages: 7 and Above
of Players: One only
Price: \$49.95

Ability Level:	Intermediate
Packaging:	Excellent (9)
Documentation:	Excellent (9)
Graphics/Text:	Excellent (9)
Playability:	Excellent (10)
CP RATING:	9.50

accurate aim. Until this technique is mastered, you'll spend a lot of time on the first level and, sadly, be deprived of EbonStar's more advanced challenges.

As a one-player game, EbonStar has little to offer. As a multi-player game, EbonStar comes to life. Ultimately, its fly and shoot action may wear thin. However, a lively crowd of computer enthusiasts will keep the challenge spirited for many hours or at least until your friendships (or marriages or families) dissolve in a rush of computer induced competition.

Circle Reader Service Number 33

Name: EBONSTAR
Type: Arcade
Format: Amiga
Publisher: Micro Illusions
Distributor: Activision
Designers: Michael & Robert McNally
Ages: 10 to adult
Players: One to Four
Requirements: 512K RAM
Price: \$39.95

Ability Level:	Intermediate
Packaging:	Fair (4)
Documentation:	Fair (4)
Graphics:	Fair (3)
Playability:	Very Good (7)
CP RATING:	5.25

Dawn of the Red Sun

By Bill Oxner

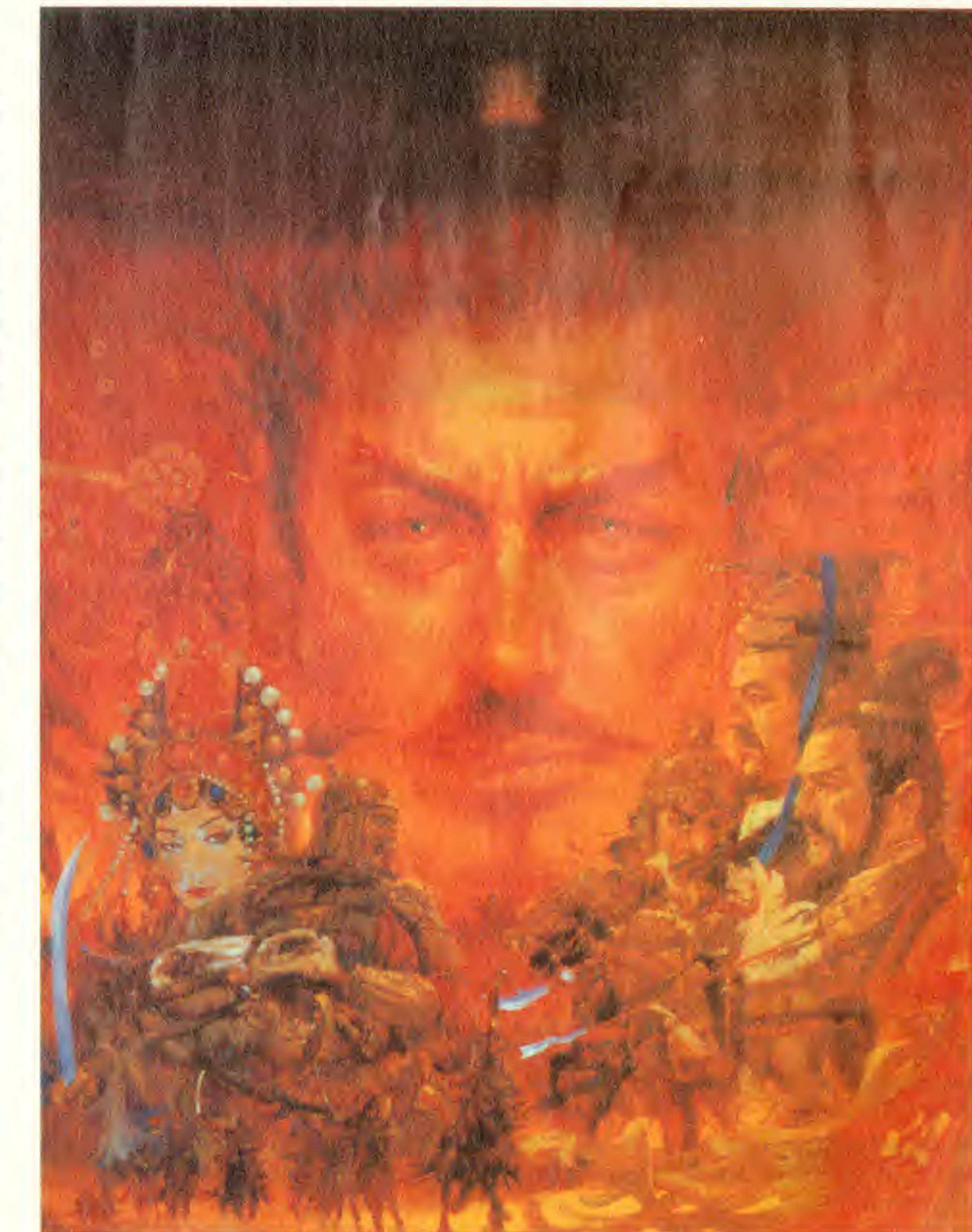
pan for over four years. Numerous revisions and updated versions preceded the copy that has arrived here. The numerous "safeguards" should be given special recognition. In situations where hitting the wrong key could cause disaster — such as "surrendering" during a critical battle — you are given a second

chance to insure that you made the intended choice.

Hardware/Graphics

These are the best graphics I've seen on an IBM game with an EGA card. Animation is minimal but done nicely. The map of Japan is sharp and easy to read on-screen. I can't fault any aspect of the

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Mister Goodwrench

The basic game mechanics are slick and clean. I did not find a single bug in the game or in the documentation. This is perhaps not surprising, given Japanese quality controls. It is also related to the fact that the game has been available in Ja-

players three and four at locations on the Amiga keyboard. It's nice if you happen to have the Amiga connected to a projection television. If not, expect to bump heads as much as you bash spacecraft.

EbonStar features a range of computerized enemies, each with its own look and larceny. Higher levels contain more dangerous bad guys. It may be a fault of EbonStar that advancing to other levels takes place only by destroying the orbiting satellite. This requires an intricate maneuver that involves accurate positioning of a spacecraft and deadly

The Frisbees of Dreamland

By J.L. Miller



Project Stealth Fighter is a flight simulation/wargame of "America's Newest Top Secret Aircraft". As such, the accuracy of the simulation is debatable — not because of any failing on the part of the designers, but rather because the actual flight envelope of the aircraft is highly classified. In fact, a recent public announcement was made of the development of the Stealth aircraft in April 1988; even pictures of the airplane have been generally limited to artist's renditions and little hard data has been released. Pentagon officials and pilots are reluctant to confirm or deny any statements about the Stealth technology other than to say that it is a modern weapon system which considerably buttresses the defensive posture of US Forces.

But then what is the purpose of such a craft? As the name implies, the Stealth fighter is the "Surprise in the Sky". The F-19 has no corners, no box shapes which would allow radar signals to bounce off; designed to emit a blurry infrared signature at most, the Stealth aircraft penetrates hostile airspace through invis-

ibility and not agility. Simulation designer **Arnold Hendrick** has analogized the Stealth aircraft to a submarine; careful unobserved maneuver will allow the Stealth to reach its destination and accomplish its mission.

Tom Clancy's popular novel *Red Storm Rising* relies heavily on Stealth technology (the "Frisbees of Dreamland"); the Ghostriders destroy Soviet IL-76 Mainstays, an AWACs-type aircraft together with Soviet air defense forces, thereby giving air parity and allowing the land battle for Western Europe to be fought on more equal terms (cf. pp. 173-181).

DOCUMENTATION

Microprose traditionally produces examples of the finest packaging and documentation extant in the industry. Stealth continues this tradition; the cover art portrays a flight of Stealth aircraft overflying enemy positions and producing destruction thereon. The documentation gives a complete analysis of the purpose of the Stealth, its probable (?) flight char-

acteristics and detailed layered-on instructions which permit the user to quickly gain familiarity with the simulation, boot up the game and take to the Unfriendly Skies.

Included with the documentation is a keyboard overlay. With over thirty (30) separate operations and keystrokes, this overlay allows easy access to the mechanics of air operations. These include Radar Jammer, Infrared Jammer, Bay Door (Open/Close), Accelerated Time, Engines (Off/On), Landing Gear (Up/Down), Flaps (Extended/Retracted), Speed Brakes, Throttle (Increase/Decrease), View (Left/Front/Right), Weapons Bay Access (1-4), Weapon Shutdown, 20mm Cannon, Threat Display, Eject, INS (Set/Switch), Map (Tactical/Strategic), Display (Target Weapons>Status) and Pause.

Also included are a technical supplement (machine specific), which summarizes the cockpit, controls and loading instructions and air maps for AOs (Areas of Operation, e.g. Libya, the Persian Gulf, the North Cape and Central Europe).

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◀ 40

GRAPHICS/TEXT

The graphics are similar to **Gunship** and other flight simulators. There is a slight problem in that memory limitations have compelled a lack of differentiation between certain land and sea areas, but this should have little deleterious effect upon the average gamer.

REALISM

Who knows? Since Stealth technology is so highly classified, the degree of accuracy of the simulation will be shrouded in secrecy. But unlike **F-15 Strike Eagle**, Stealth does allow for take-offs and landings (both land- and carrier-based). For the aficionado of air simulations, this is an appreciated gesture. The fact that landings are so difficult at realistic levels will make most gamers opt for the easier levels of play; even designer Arnold

Hendrick admits to opting for easier levels when he has been away from the design for a week or so.

PLAYABILITY

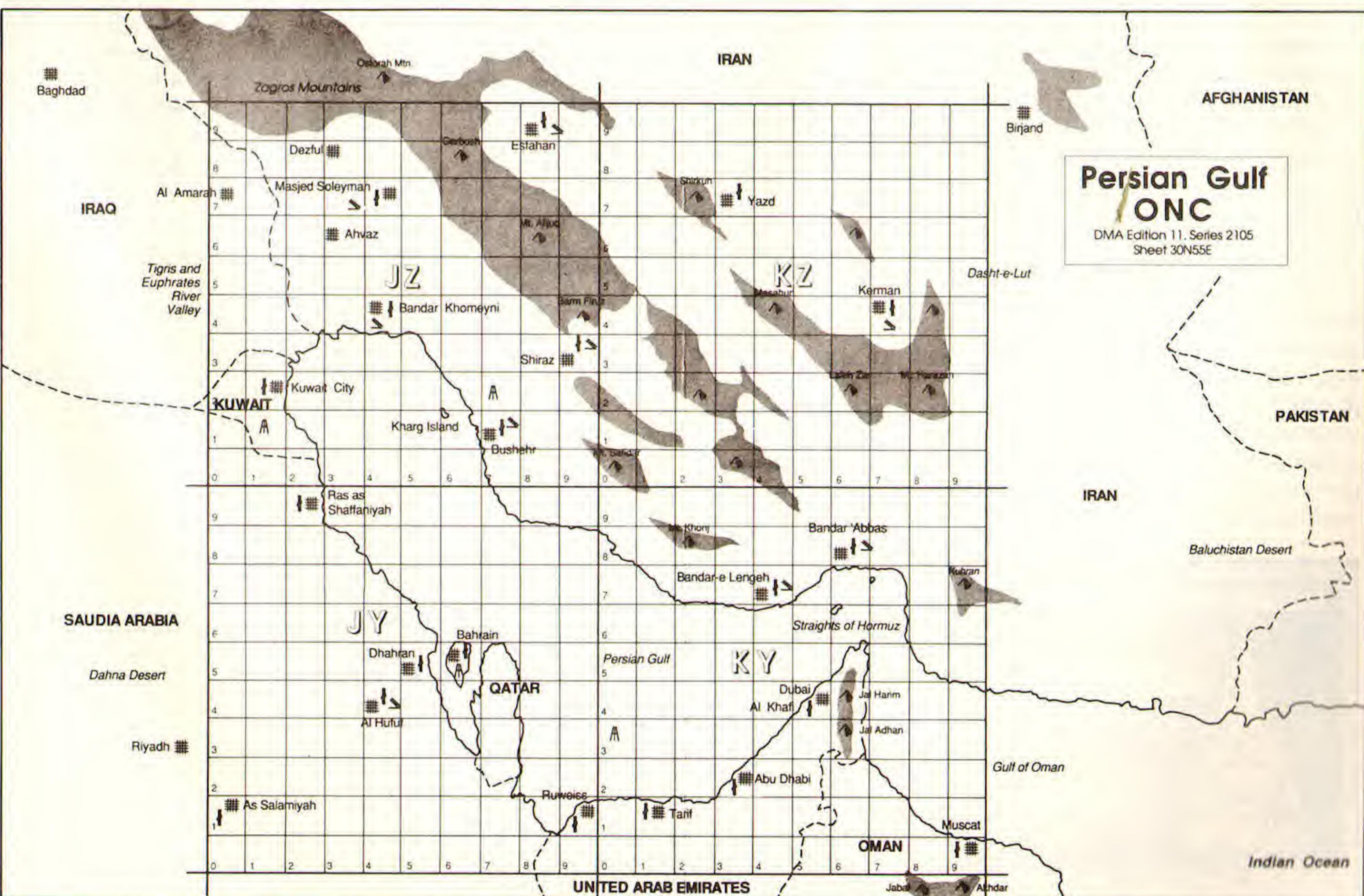
Besides determining which AO to operate in, one can choose between Cold War, Limited War or General War. Realistically, General War scenarios should be limited to the North Cape or Central Europe scenarios; as a reading of the daily papers will reveal, Libya and the Persian Gulf will more than suffice for Cold War and Limited War scenarios. Also, one can choose between an air or a ground target.

Using your radar is a quick move to defeat. Moving at high or low altitude is the key to successful operations; the documentation suggests high altitude maneuver, while Tom Clancy's **Red Storm Rising** extols the merits of NOE (nap-of-earth) flight.

Flight maneuvers are easy to accomplish, but difficult to accomplish well in a hostile environment. The computer opponent is not a push-over, especially at the higher levels, and can prove to be a disquieting hazard. Remember, stealth is the name of the game, and the prime objective. Premature spotting can disrupt a successful mission; the Stealth fighter is a somewhat unwieldy flight platform for dogfighting. The cannon appears to be an outmoded offensive weapon; while the gun can bring down an enemy plane, sophisticated anti-air missiles are more efficient and deadly.

Also, "smart bombs" are much more efficient than "free-fall" types. The former are "fire-and-forget" systems; the latter are "fire and forget any chance to get out alive" type systems. The more sophisticated systems can be launched from ranges which allow the pilot to accom-

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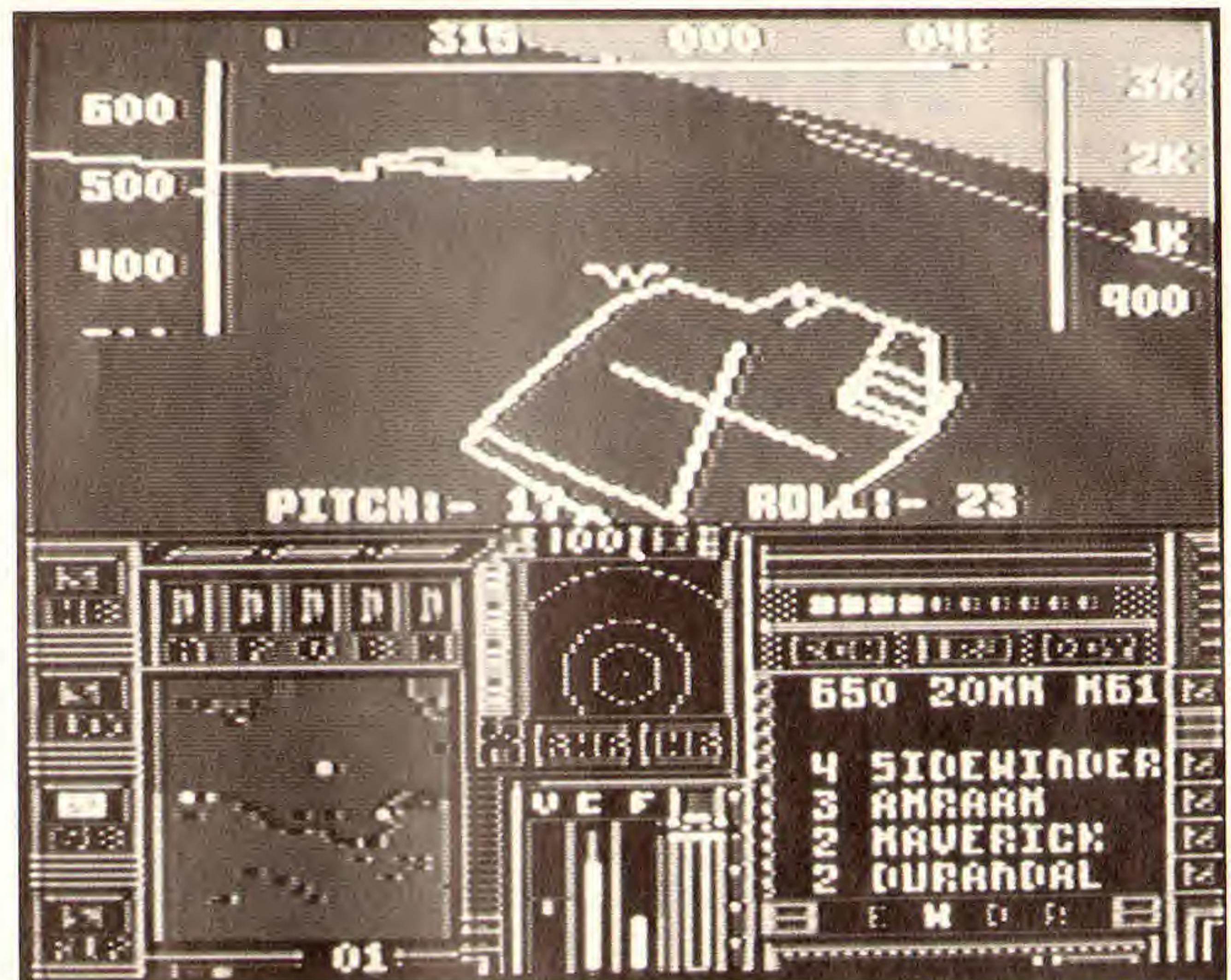


plish his mission and escape; the older systems force the pilot to drop the bomb within 500-2000 feet of the target. Old pilots use "smart" bombs while young bold pilots use "free fall" bombs; there are NO old bold pilots.

Successful mission accomplishment leads to its own reward—a congenial bar scene wherein you are surrounded by your cronies. An unsuccessful mission leads to the same scene, although with a difference; this time, you're on your own, a likely candidate for Alcoholics Anonymous.

STEALTH & THE IBM

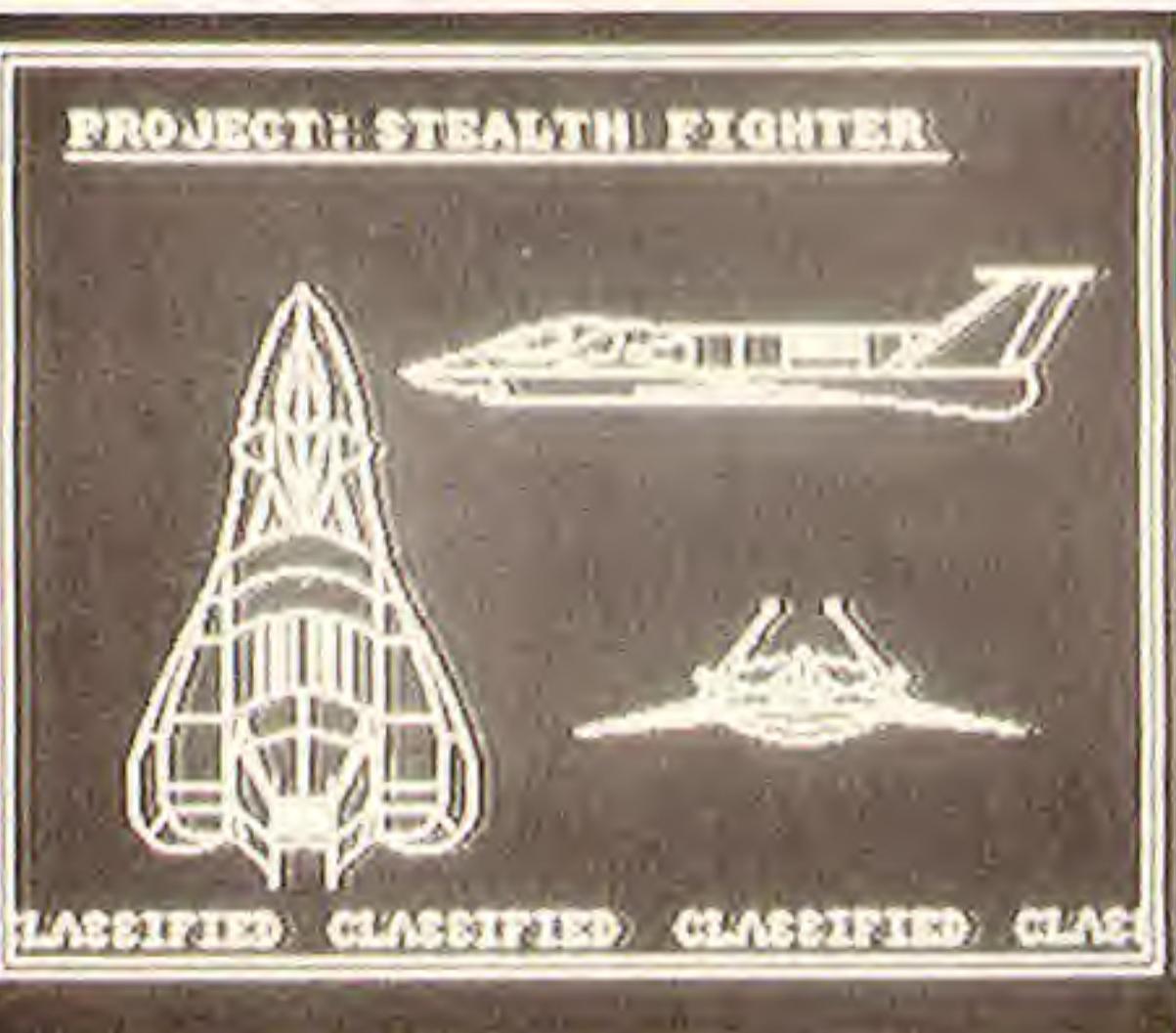
Stealth will be substantially modified for the IBM-release. Microprose will release the IBM version under a different name. Additional features include: two cockpit views (with one allowing a wider perspective a la Sub Logic's Stealth), improved graphics, new cockpit displays (the Stealth bar gauge will be modified to show not only your electronic signature, but how close the enemy is to achieving lock-on; when the bar lines intersect, it's Just a Shot Away), and an improved navigational system (the Commodore allows plotting between points A and B; the IBM version will allow plotting up to four consecutive points, thereby allowing you to plot intermediate objectives in order to evade enemy concentrations).



The biggest flaw in the Commodore version concerned friendly air fields. Distance readouts are available for enemy targets, but not friendly air fields (memory considerations ruled this out); Arnold Hendrick is currently working on a solution for the IBM version (as of April) and is confident that this weakness will be corrected in the 16-bit product. This will make returning to base much easier to achieve. Microprose indicates a September 1st release date for the IBM version.

CONCLUSIONS

Playability is the nub, and therein lies the rub. Stealth is a fine simulation; but it is not a break-through in computer design. With the availability of *Flight Simulator II*, *F-15*, *Stealth Fighter*, *Stealth*, *Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer* and numerous other flight simulators already released or in the process thereof, this product does not break away from the pack. That is not to say that it is not an excellent product; in fact, it is. But the flight simulators have produced some of the best software on the market and *Stealth*'s status as a fine product produced by a reputable company does not make it a "must have" except for those persons who have not yet tried a flight simulator.



Name: PROJECT STEALTH FIGHTER
Type: Simulation/Strategy
Formats: C64/128 & IBM
Publisher: Microprose Software
Designers: Synoski and Hendrick
Ages: 12 to adult
Players: One only
Requirements: Joystick (C64)
Price: \$39.95

Ability Level: Intermediate-Advanced
Packaging: Excellent (10)
Documentation: Excellent (10)
Graphics: Very good (8)
Realism: Very good (8)
Playability: Very good (7.5)

CP RATING: 8.25

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graphics, although it should be noted that the game was reviewed exclusively in EGA mode. Gamers with monochrome monitors will not get the full flavor of the game. A graphics card (CGA or EGA) is required.

Also, please note carefully that the game is too large to be played on a single disk-drive system. You must have either two drives OR a hard drive. If you don't have these items, may I suggest that the game is good enough to justify the purchase of a color monitor and EGA card?

Into the depths

You already know your basic assignment—unite Japan. The joy in the game comes from the wealth of options which you have to achieve your goal. The first option is to choose a particular daimyo as your character. You can choose Nobunaga himself or any one of seven other possibilities. Each daimyo has particular strengths and weaknesses. Each one is rated for Age, Health, Ambition, Luck, Charm and IQ. Each of these characteristics is valuable to a specific task. For example, Ambition, Luck and IQ will help you win battles. A high Charm rating assists in diplomatic negotiations. You have the ability to change these ratings before gameplay begins. Don't leave home without a character high in all categories!

Year by Year

Each turn consists of one season of a year, four turns per year. Your character ages as the game progresses so there is a time limit to achieving success. Specific events occur in specific seasons. Taxes and the rice harvest occur in the fall. A good strategist will take advantage of this by raising productivity in the summer.

Your character has a choice of 21 different options for each turn. These include such items as Move (to another fief), War (attack a neighbor), Tax (change the tax rate), Send (rice or gold), Flood Control (build new dikes), Marriage (negotiate to marry another daimyo's daughter), Steal Peasants (from a neighbor), etc. Some options are military, some are economic and



some are diplomatic. Your success in the game is dependent on a proper mix among the three agendas.

Pike to Pike

War is conducted on a tactical battlefield. Terrain is an important part of your considerations. The attacker places his units first and then the defender. Placement is critical. Be sure to analyze the particular battleground (each one is different) before placing units. There are five different options for each turn of the battle. Take advantage of terrain, attack, retreat, fight a war of attrition or go directly after the enemy general. Just be sure your side is smarter, tougher and better prepared.

Game Events

NOBUNAGA has a number of seasonal events, some of them random. Each Spring the merchant posts new prices for gold and rice. Trading (speculation) can be an interesting part of the game.

Fall is the time of harvest and taxes. The army must be fed and paid at this time, as well as debts to the merchant.

Summer is the time for typhoons and flooding. Damage can be minimized by keeping flood controls high.

Plague can occur in any season. Be sure to keep your daimyo healthy (the Recuperate option) or else he may fall victim to plague, along with many of your peasants and troops.

Revols can be military mutinies or peasant uprisings. The level of loyalty by each group determines the probability of revolt. Your character can enhance loyalty

by giving gold or rice to the soldiers and peasants.

Scenarios

There are two different scenarios available, both are very challenging. The first is a map with 17 fiefs that must be conquered. It is "easier" than the 50 fief scenario and serves as good preparation for the "campaign" game of 50. My own experience is heavily weighted to strategy games but I must admit that even the 17 fief scenario was a very, very difficult task. This is NOT a "gimme" game, you will work hard for every victory. It is strongly recommended that new players start with the 17 fief scenario.

The documentation states that a "good" player can complete the short game in about four to five hours. Apparently, they were talking about good Japanese players. This reviewer took about 15 hours to win the short game. In my own defense, it was my first game!

Strategy

Successful unification of Japan will take military conquest but you should wait till your home economy is strong before attacking. Start by increasing your tax level to about 40% (just like all other governments) and cultivating the land to increase production. Expanding the size of your towns will also increase the taxes raised.

Gold should be used sparingly in the beginning. As you develop a surplus you may use it to raise troop and peasant loyalty.

ONE GREAT GAME

DESERVES
ANOTHER



KIT AND KEY

◀ 45

The next stage is to begin attacking and conquering neighboring fiefs. There is an View command which (at a cost) will allow you to spy on potential victims. Use it! Never attack with less than 2-1 odds. It will probably be necessary to recruit more soldiers before each attempt. Also, remember to leave enough defenders at home so that your back door is safe while you are away on a voyage of conquest.

There is another nice touch in that you are not required to "administer" every fief under your control. After you taken three or four fiefs, you will want to place some of them under computer control. The computer will administer the fief(s) in your absence, although you can regain control at any time. The computer will maintain the economy, do flood control and keep loyalty among your people.

Playability

The goal of all COMPUTER PLAY reviews is to always focus on playability. NOBUNAGA'S AMBITION is extremely playable. There is a certain smoothness to the entire process. Once you have learned the basic mechanics of play, you will find that each turn takes only a few seconds to complete (unless a battle is in progress). Numerous menus keep you informed of your choices at all times. The bulk of game time is spent on thinking about your options, not in worrying about game mechanics.

I want to also explain one other detail that may explain how I felt about this game. We were well into production of our first issue when the review copy of the game arrived. Production time at a magazine is only slightly less hectic and stressful than a NASA Shuttle launch. Every second is critical and there are hundreds of jobs to do. I booted up the game just out of curiosity at about 10 PM one evening. The next thing I knew it was 11 AM the next morning and I was still playing! If there are any serious typos or mistakes in this issue then you can blame NOBUNAGA. The game is addictive and should have a warning label on it.

I keep thinking about one small item whenever I consider the overall value of this game. It relates to Japanese autos.

My first foreign auto was a Honda. Great cars that would get a high CP RATING. The car was dependable, attractive and functional. Yet, one of the things that seemed to please every Honda owner the most was a "change pocket" built into the dashboard. It was handy for small change that you might need at a toll booth or drive-in hamburger stand. It had nothing at all to do with the basic purpose of an auto but it was just one more proof of the attention to detail that goes into Japanese cars. It gave you a mental satisfaction that if they put that much consideration to such a small detail then the big items (like the engine) must have similar quality.

The same idea applies to NOBUNAGA. You are constantly impressed with the attention to minor details of graphics or user interface. It is fast-moving and easy to play but historically accurate. In automobile terminology it is called "fit and finish". This means the doors close tightly and the paint job is perfect. NOBU-

NAGA'S doors are very tight (game play) and the paint job (graphics) are among the best.

I'm not a serious student of Japanese history but I'm told that the characters in the game are extremely accurate in terms of abilities and strengths. The documentation contains a lengthy analysis of each character in the game and would serve as an introductory textbook for this period of Japanese history. However, the game stands by itself and you can ignore the historical setting and still enjoy the game.

I actually received two games from KOEI. NOBUNAGA was so good that I was tempted to hoard the other game (ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS) and review it myself for our next issue. However, I was generous and you will be able to read Bob Lindstrom's review of ROMANCE next time.

If you enjoy military, economic simulations you will love NOBUNAGA'S AMBITION. If you haven't experienced these types of games yet then it will serve as an excellent first product. It is Japanese quality at its finest. Circle Reader Service Number 44.

Name: NOBUNAGA'S AMBITION
Type: Strategy
Formats: IBM
Publisher: Koei Corp
Designer: Many
Ages: 12 to adult
Players: One to eight
Requirements: Two drives, CGA/EGA card
Price: \$59.95
Ability Level:
Packaging:
Documentation:
Graphics/Text:
Realism:
Playability:
CP RATING:
Intermediate
Very Good (8)
Excellent (10)
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9.15

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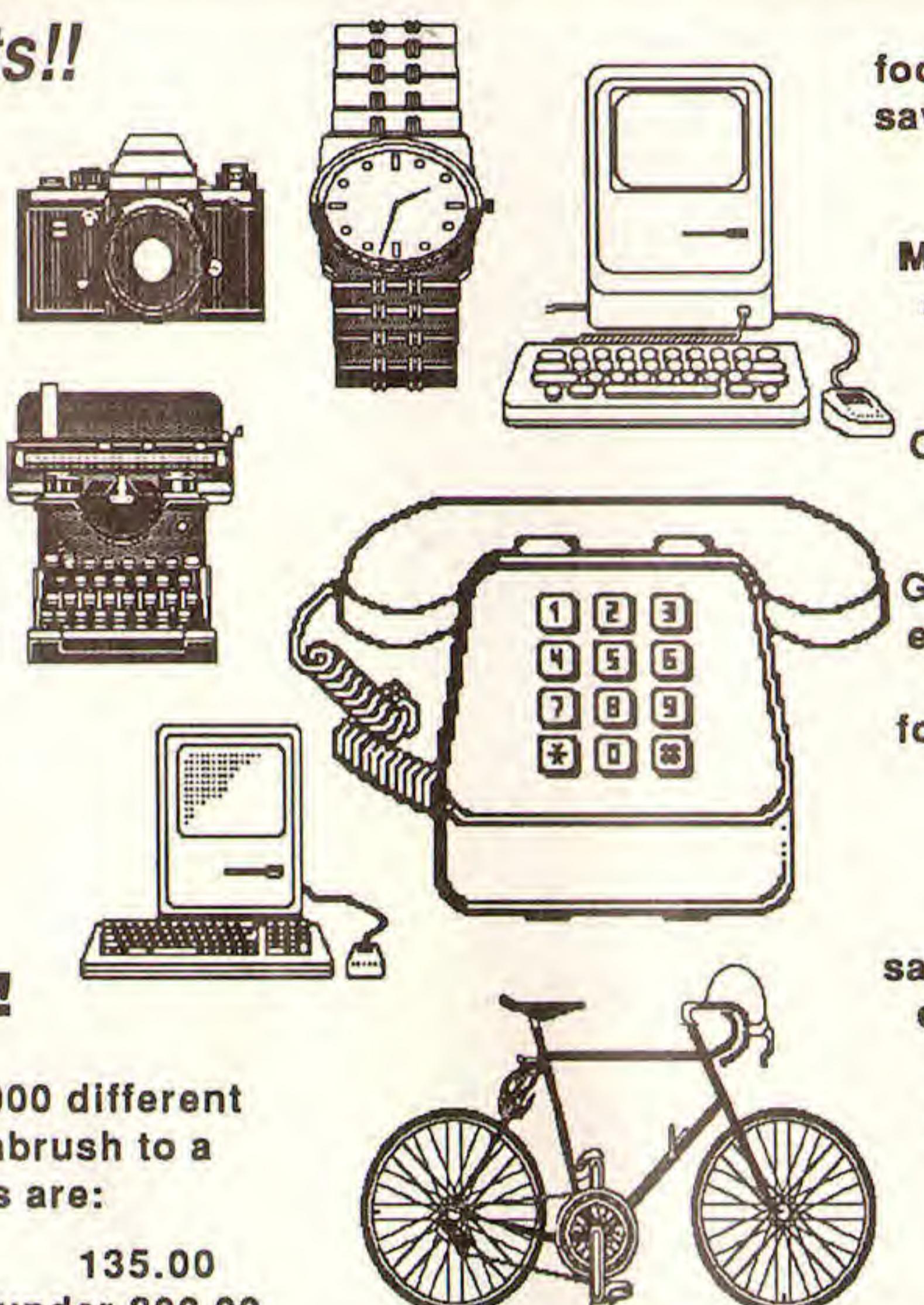
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Channel Three

By Bill
"The Cat"
Morris

THE ULTIMATE

Hey, did you get your NES (Nintendo Entertainment System) way back when their idea of a "joystick" was some crazy bar with buttons and a flat directional movement controller? And now even the new Nintendo systems come with this same type of controller. Once you get used to it, it's ok, but it's not what I'm used to at the paying arcades. Isn't that what our Nintendo systems are for, playing the arcade hits or their translations at home?

A lot of other companies came out with joysticks, just like computer joysticks for the Nintendo, but they still weren't right. Then Nintendo gave us a solid unit with a good large joystick, plus large A and B buttons, just like at the arcades. Add buttons to slow down the game or speed up the action and you have the **ADVANTAGE** at home. What a name, but what a price!

So, in steps Taiwan to do to the Japanese what they have been doing to the USA for years, give us a product with everything the high priced model has, plus more, for fewer bucks. The **ULTIMATE** superstick is the name and comes from **Beeshu Inc.** It has a one year warranty and a retail price below \$40. For me, it brings the arcade feel home. A future issue of Computer Play will feature a joystick face-off among the various entries. Until then, we can say that the **ULTIMATE** superstick is king. **Beeshu** has also announced that it will be distributing enhanced joysticks for the IBM and Apple worlds. Circle Reader Service Number 37.

BYA KNOCKOUT

Well, in the ring we have lots of good action, but when it comes to boxing, I hope you've seen **MIKE TYSON'S PUNCH OUT** from Nintendo. This one is a clean upper-cut above the others for now. You've got this tiny little guy to beat up on several monster opponents from all over the world. These guys are tough, but there's the fun. You can't move about much, but you can knock them flat on the mat.

As you advance through the various



sets of matches you get a password that will let you start again from that level. Your last match will be against Kid Dynamite himself (Mike Tyson) and he's World Heavyweight Champion of this game too. But he can be beaten.

This game has lots of arcade feel and lots of excitement. I like it and so do a million other buyers out there. Circle Reader Service Number 38.

There is another boxing game that came out about the same time that is kind of hidden in the shadow of **MIKE TYSON**. This one is called **RING KING** from **Data East**. It has a lot more play options that make it more of a strategy game, but harder to get right into with all its options.

It does let you move all around the ring, like in a real boxing match. And it has a two player option, so you can box it out with a "friend" rather than take what the computer dishes out. This is a good game with a lot of good punches, but a lot less fun. Circle Reader Service Number 39.

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

A legend is something that lives on and on. **ZELDA** certainly does that. What a stroke of genius to put a battery backup (five years) SAVE option for three games into this cartridge. No more starting from the beginning every time or putting in password codes. And this one goes on and on with characters and enemies and objects to find.

Very playable and very good. If you don't have it, you're not one of the well

over a million who do. And, if you finish the nine levels in this game, you can try it again but with a tougher fight by entering your name as "Zelda". Now see if you can finish nine levels!.

And by now we've all heard of the legend of **Zelda II**. This continuing adventure of Link is being enjoyed by those in Japan, but we await its crossing of the ocean. There have been lots of excuses given for its delayed arrival, but someday the **LEGEND** will continue for us. Circle Reader Service Number 40.

A RADICAL KID

Based on an arcade game, **KID NIKI** from **Data East** is a good one for the younger kids that aren't into the complex games of oriental fighting. All this little kid has is a spinning sword and a good jump. There are seven levels and lots of enemies to defeat. At the end of each level is a Big Boss, something like the tough kid of the block out to beat you up.

There are lots of bonus items around and each level has a "secret" room that will get you more treasures. It also helps a lot to turn on auto-fire. A fairly standard game with "kid" graphics. Circle Reader Service Number 41.

PRESSING THE OFF BUTTON

Well, that's it for this issue. We hope to start covering more and newer stuff for you next time. Keep on hitting A's and B's in school, so you can keep on hitting A's and B's on your Nintendo.

Past, Present, Future

By Roy Wagner

When I work, my work is computer work. When I play, my play is COMPUTER PLAY. (What a plug, but it's the truth.) My brand of home computer by choice has always been a Commodore. I've had (and still have) a PET 2001 with the small keyboard, a C64, and two Amigas. I've always liked the Apple computers, but they have always seemed priced beyond their capabilities. I've kept clear of working with MS-DOS, but do find that the games written for them are well done.

When I review an MS-DOS game, I use my Amiga. I get a big Cheshire smile because I can multi-process both computers from the same box and on the same screen. I play the game in a PC window and run my favorite Amiga word processor in an Amiga window at the same time. And if I have the Amiga version of the game, I'll have it multi-tasking (running at the same time) in another Amiga window for comparisons. (Note: Not all Amiga games will multi-task, as decided by the company releasing the game.) To me the Amiga is the ultimate game machine.

I am quite thrilled about writing for this new magazine that "seriously" considers the PLAY elements of computer games. Games ARE FOR PLAY as a diversion from "real" life. We all need to know how to best spend our money, earned from hard work, for some worthwhile play. How much play will a game get before it starts collecting dust on the shelf? How long will it lay near the computer ready for quick access before being passed on to a friend? That's truly up to you, but I'll try to recommend those worth your time and dollar.

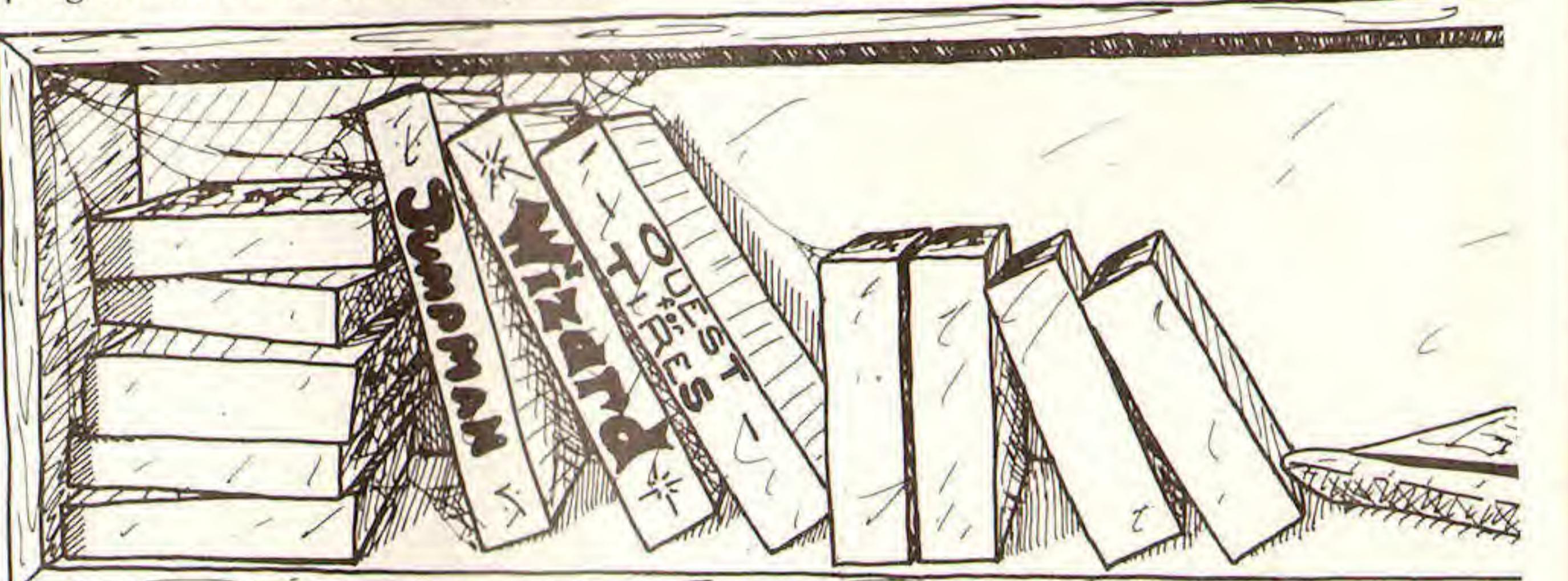
You'll probably be seeing mostly reviews from me, but when I have something to put into perspective, you'll see a column. I'll try to get you to seek out some of the great computer games from the past. I'll try to let you know those hot games present on the shelves now. I'll even mention some of the games being worked on that will hopefully make it to the dealer shelves and mail order catalogs in the near future.

PAST

One of the true classics, and a fun

computer game is JUMPMAN (1983 by Randy Glover) from Epyx. In the game, one of the first little computer persons plays climbs and jumps, as he is challenged by a variety of different levels (30) with three groupings (Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced). This game is one of the best designed and playable games on a home computer. It features great graphics, animation, and sound. It has three levels of play. The top player scores are saved to disk. It shows lots of creative originality.

This game was followed by many other similar (clones) from other programmers and other companies.



Epyx also released a cartridge based version of the game with 12 new levels. Most of the clones were no where near as good. One exception being WIZARD (1984 by S.A. Moore and Steven Luedders) from Progressive Peripherals and later distributed by EA. It features forty levels and has a game construction set to build add your own levels. Both of these are definite must-play games for the computer PLAYer.

Another classic from the past that represents the early licensing of a known cartoon/comic character is BC'S QUEST FOR TIRES (1984 by Sydney) from Sierra (On-Line). This game was no ripoff of a known character like many that have appeared over the years. It was worthwhile and a dedicated rendition of Johnny Hart's famous BC characters.

The game plays well with good animation. And it was more than fun, it was FUNNY. The familiar characters are there and the graphics are true

renditions of their comic image. The object of the game is rescue Cute Chick and you'll have a great time doing it.

Both JUMPMAN and BC have had follow up sequels, that carried on the same ideas. But just like the movies, the first one of the series is the best.

PRESENT

A game that is presently available, though first released over a year ago, that will certainly rank as a true classic is SHANGHAI (1986 by Brodie Lockard) from Activision. This game on the Amiga is a work of perfection. The MAC version is very nice, but lacks color. There is also an MS-DOS version that is poor in monochrome, but nice in color. The C64 version is atrocious and an insult to the computer. It could have

may be enhanced; better graphics, added game features, better playability, etc. They know how to do conversions the way they should be done with respect to the computer they are on, and with respect to the buyer.

So back to SHANGHAI: the title of this game tells it all. It will take any innocent player that loads it on their computer and shanghai them away from any other pending activities, friends, and family. And if anyone else should wander into the room while this game is in play, they too will be taken hostage to play of the game.

The game is so simple in concept that anyone can play. Likewise, the strategy is very easy to grasp. The pairing of mah jong like "tiles" with matching Chinese characters is all that it is about. Once

The first time I played it, I was at the keyboard for three hours straight before pausing. I then came back for another



started you will probably play for several hours.

The game options are about the most complete of any game you will buy. It has them all and then some. If you have a resident computer widow around the house, show them this game. It will probably even get them to use the computer.

Another game presently available brings the quarter arcade game into the home. But until the Amiga, no other home computer could truly do it. Sure there have been lots of arcade like games for your home computer, but now several recent releases for the Amiga are worth every quarter you put into buying them rather than into those big boxes in noisy pizza parlors. The Amiga motherboard is actually being used for many of the games in the real arcades.

Top on my list is ARKANOID (1987) licensed from Taito by Discovery

Software. The game already has many clones on the Amiga and other computers, but only ARKANOID, IS the arcade version. It even displays messages to insert quarters. The graphics are identical and the sounds are true and in stereo. This is one of the few arcade games that you can buy that is extremely playable. It does NOT require you to start at the beginning each time you lose all your lives. You can keep right on playing from the very level at which you ended. You have thirty-three levels and you can start play at any level up to twenty. It even has a PAUSE key.

THE THREE STOOGES from CinemaWare is very exciting. It looks like the most advanced game title for the Amiga from this company yet. It uses digitized images from actual movies with the Three Stooges. The game play looks to be simple and fun. It introduces "real talk" which uses actual digitized and compressed audio from the films. The graphics are great.

The game play concept is to raise mortgage money for an orphanage about to be foreclosed by a nasty banker. You must travel from one scene to another, from square to square as on a board game, to get the needed money. Some squares offer Three Stooges trivia questions for "money". Many of the squares bring up classic scenes from the Three Stooges movies, with arcade like play. This one looks really good.

Another exciting new game coming soon is FORMULA FERRARI from EA. This is more than just another racing game. It is designed to actually be used for "league" racing. A group of racing fans can design and equip their own Ferrari, and race against one another. Many of the famous tracks from around the world are graphically reproduced. A mouse is used to control the racer, but the control feels very realistic. The race car drifts from side to side on your monitor and rear view mirrors show approaching competitors. TEST DRIVE from Accolade hit the road first, but this one should win the race.

* * * * *

Well that's it for this first issue. I hope you enjoyed these brief comments about games worth playing. Remember that the time and money you spend on computer play should be worth it. I hope I can give you the information to buy the best.

Play your best, it's more fun that way.

Cast and Crew

A few notes about our reviewers

Bob Lindstrom

Bob was recently voted the Best Software Reviewer 1987 by the Software Publisher's Association. He is Entertainment Editor for A magazine. He directs the games sections on QuantumLink and AppleLink. His articles also appear in Amiga World, Info and Commodore magazines. Contributing to our international flavor, Bob writes a regular column for COMputer, a Scandinavian publication. Bob worked for nine years as the classical music and dance critic for The Oregonian newspaper and is a professional violinist and conductor. He is our Resident Renaissance Man and currently lives in northern Oregon.

RUSEL DEMARIA

Rusel writes a weekly computer column for The Maui News and a monthly column for Nikkei Byte in Japan. He is MS DOS editor for Macazine and a regular contributor to other magazines including Byte, PC Week, and Business Software Magazine. His articles and product reviews have also appeared in Macworld, Mac Week, PC Magazine, A+, ST Log, and The Whole Earth Catalog. He has also written a number of technical reference books. In his infrequent spare time, he plays flamenco and classical guitar while watching the sunset on the beach in Maui.

ROY WAGNER

Roy has been into computer games

Game Hints & Tips

The original purchasers of ULTIMA V may have discovered that the game cannot correctly use the music boards on an Apple IIgs, even though the board's demo software works.

Origin Systems has now developed a method to correct this problem for users with an Apple IIgs and Mockingboard, Phasor or Passport MIDI cards. Updated program disks are

available to all registered owners. Contact Origin Systems, 136 Harvey Road, Bldg B, Londonderry, NH 03053.

Yes, I talking to YOU!

This column will serve as a resource center for gamers. We will publish submitted hints and tips for all games. If you have found a shortcut to success or a way around a bug — send the tip

Letters

The mail bag was a bit light this month. The most likely reason is that no one had ever heard of us and were therefore reluctant to write to a non-existent magazine. Well, you heard of us now!

Tell us what you like about the magazine, what you dislike, what you want to see more of, less of, about the same of and a lot of other o's. If your entry is legible, legal and sufficiently non-pornographic — then we'll print it. Otherwise, we'll send it to your mom.

The next voice you hear

Given the lack of letters, we did have one idea that unfortunately failed. We contacted Shirley McLaine and asked her if she could channel some letters to us from readers in the future. She explained that her talent only works with dead folk and they are notoriously bad letter writers, plus she would charge extra for translations of text by non-English speakers. Hey! Give us credit for trying!

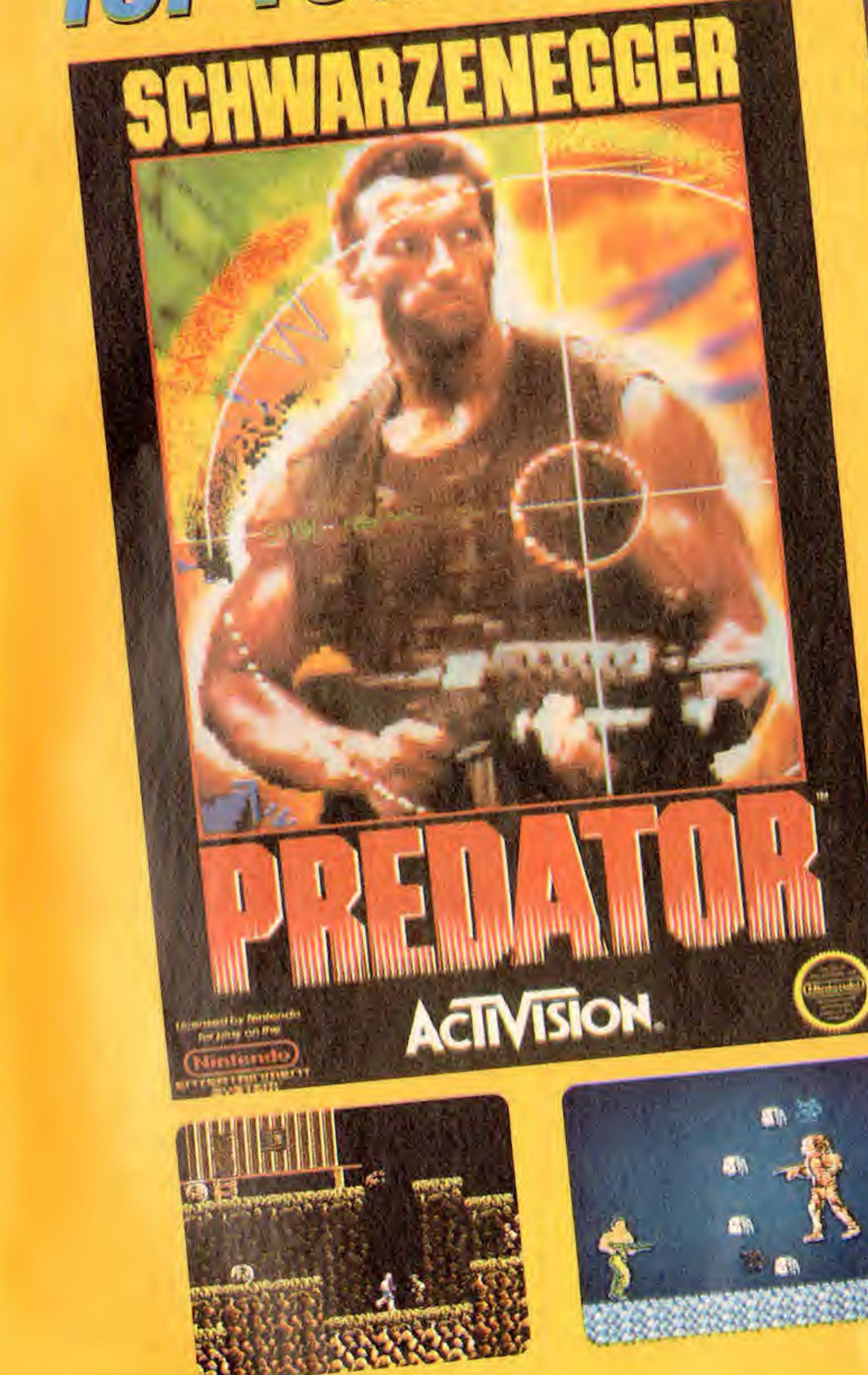
If you are alive and literate—send your comments and suggestions to: Computer Play, 3321 W. Dempster, Skokie, IL 60076. We promise to give them all the attention they deserve.

along to COMPUTER PLAY. See your name in print and be the envy of your neighborhood. Yeah, that means we don't pay any bucks for 'em. But, hey, you're a good guy, right? Share those hard-won secrets with your fellow gamers. What goes around, comes around — go keep the good stuff going.

Send your pearls of wisdom to: Computer Play, 3321 W. Dempster, Skokie, IL 60076.

Computer Play

3 Hot New Games for Your Nintendo



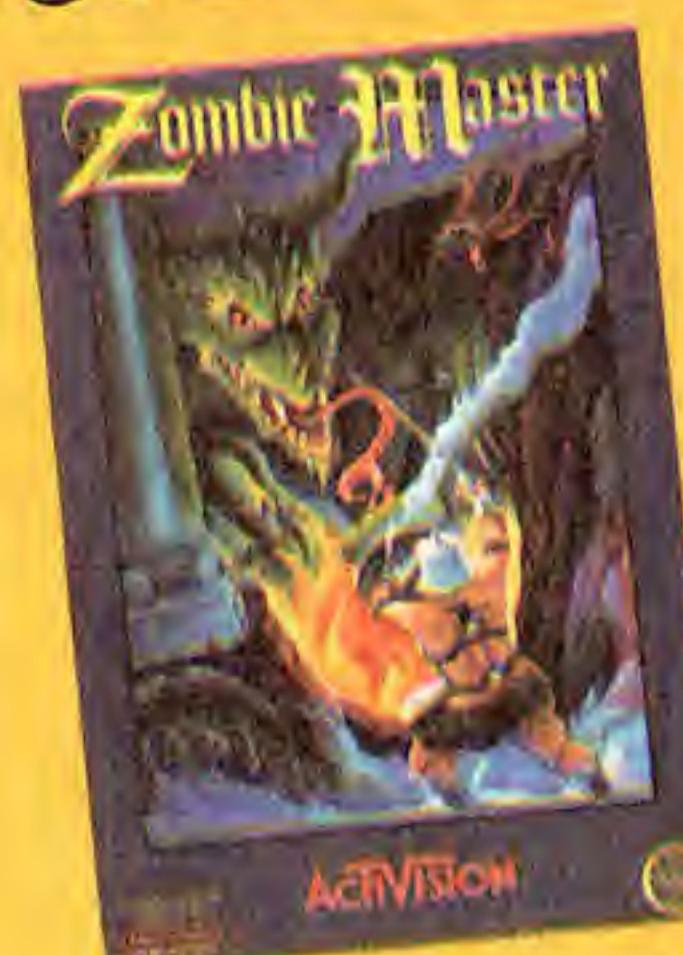
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- Pitfall Harry takes the Nintendo by storm!
- Over 270 screens, with danger at every twist, every turn, every plunge into the unknown.
 - Poisonous frogs, bats and snakes, scorpions and tarantulas, lava pits, deadly condors and none-too-friendly cavemen await you.



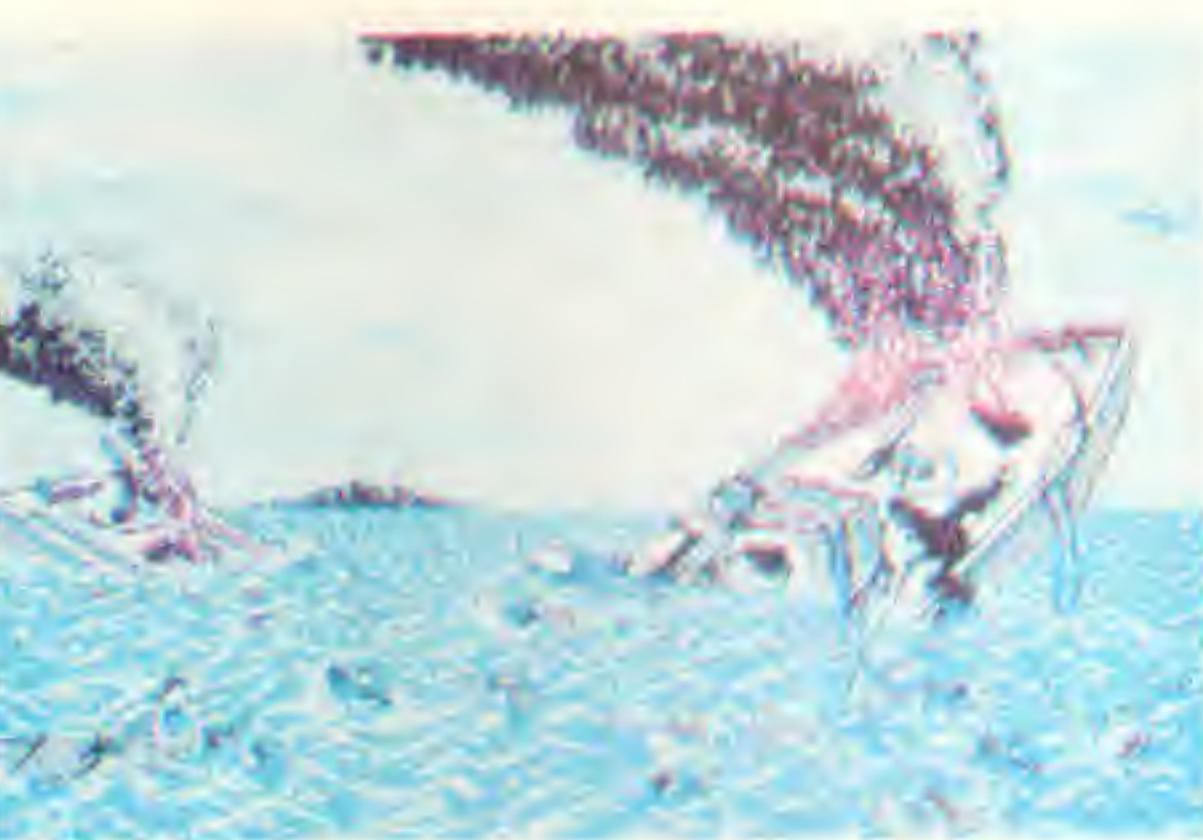
Licensed by Nintendo for play on the
Nintendo
ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Circle Reader Service No. 61



IS IT MULTIPLE CHOICE?

QUESTRON II is the long awaited sequel to the popular computer fantasy adventure game **QUESTRON**. QII begins where Q left off, with the player's character in possession of the Evil Book of Magic, which cannot be destroyed. Your task is to travel back in time and prevent the book from being created. Towns, cathedrals, forests, tombs and dungeons must be explored. Over 60 different creatures can be met and must be fought with weapons and spells such as magic missiles, fireballs, sonic whine and time sap. C64/128, Apple II, Amiga, Atari ST and IBM. Strategic Simulations. Circle Reader Service Number 11.



JFK REMEMBERED

PT-109 is a new torpedo boat simulation release. The player can go after submarines with depth charges, launch torpedoes against enemy ships, attack with surface guns - all while having to defend the ship against attacks from the sea and air. Scenarios include the Solomon Islands and other South Pacific theatres plus the Mediterranean.

There are design ties between this game and GATO, one of the most popular military titles ever. PT-109 has 45 different missions (both day and night). Details include four 90 degree views, a binocular view, detailed maps and damage reports, realistic enemy ships and planes, control panels and gauges, etc. Sound effects are also included. Mac, IBM & Apple IIgs. Digital Illusions and Spectrum HoloByte. Circle Reader Service Number 20.



GOOD NEWS OR BAD NEWS?

Terrorists have pulled off their greatest triumph in **THE PRESIDENT IS MISSING!**. They have kidnapped the Prez and the leaders of the NATO alliance. Your job is to investigate the crime and rescue the biggies. You control the central CIA computer and can assign agents to discover info about various suspects. You are assisted by a 30 minute audio cassette tape that contains the kidnapper's demands and mystery clues. Graphics are superb, with detailed dossiers and intelligence photos to aid the investigation. IBM and C64. Cosmi. Circle Reader Service Number 17.



RICHARD SIMMONS' NIGHTMARE

A new style of entertainment software is found in **LANE MASTODON vs THE**

BLUBBERMEN. These entrants go by the generic nomenclature of INFOCOMICS. It's not a bird, it's not a plane, it's a comic book on a disk! The difference between print and disk is that the computer version allows the reader/viewer to leave one character and follow the story from the viewpoint of another character. In this first of a series, Lane Mastodon, accountant turned superhero, saves humanity from the Blubbermen of Jupiter. Basically, a spoof of 1930's space operas. All Infocomics are priced at \$12. IBM, Apple & C64. Infocom. Circle Reader Service Number 13.



OK, I'LL SKATE

Another California fad, skateboarding, comes to the computer in **SKATE OR DIE**. Lots of arcade action as you learn to do fakies, 720's, aerials, rail slides, hand plants and ollies. Three authentic pro (yes, there is a pro tour) events: freestyle ramp, downhill and high jump ramp. Two special events: pool jousting and streetstyle downhill. One to eight players. C64/128, Amiga. Electronic Arts. Circle Reader Service Number 1.



THAR SHE BLOWS

DESTROYER is an authentic and

detailed combat simulation set aboard a fully-armed Fletcher Class U.S. Navy destroyer. Combines strategy, graphics and arcade action. Players select one of seven challenging missions. As Captain, the player interprets sonar and radar reports, controls depth charges, torpedoes, anti-aircraft guns, etc. An on-board computer assists in regulating the operation of the ship. Missions may include seeking and destroying an enemy sub, provide convoy escort or rescue a downed pilot. IBM, C64 & Apple. Epyx. Circle Reader Service Number 18.



THIS OLD HOUSE

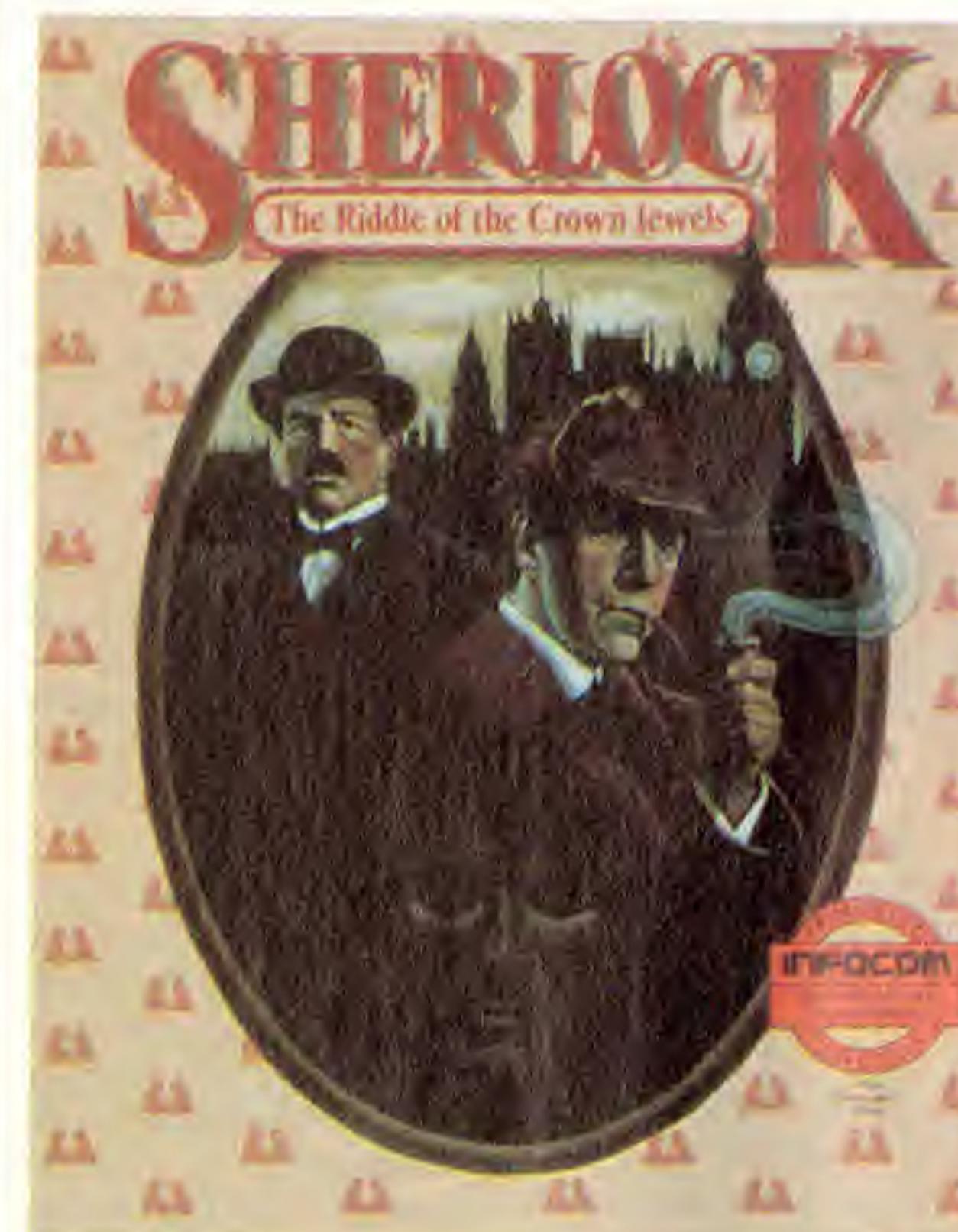
Set in medieval times, the adventure game **DARK CASTLE** features a hero who must fight his way through 14 different rooms of increasing difficulty. Hazards include plague-infested rats, attacking bats and a fire-breathing dragon. The Atari ST version combines simultaneous digitized sound and animation. Three levels of play: Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced. Players control the hero through the use of seven single-stroke keyboard commands. IBM, Amiga, C64 & Atari ST. Three-Sixty Pacific. Circle Reader Service Number 7.



AWARD FOR BEST PICTURE IS...

Now you can bring the Viet Nam

experience home in the new release, **PLATOON**, a strategic military combat simulation. The object is to have your platoon of five men survive six missions, keep their sanity and morale intact and return to base safely. A sample mission would be to lead the platoon through the jungle, pick up a box of explosives and blow up a bridge. Dangers include enemy patrols, snipers, booby-traps and hidden assassins. IBM, Atari ST & C64/128. Data East USA. Circle Reader Service Number 5.



ELEMENTARY, DEAR WATSON

The first story in the new Immortal Legends series is **SHERLOCK: THE RIDDLE OF THE CROWN JEWELS**. Sherlock Holmes' deadly enemy, Professor Moriarty, has set a challenge for Sherlock. It is Victorian London, where celebrations are being prepared for the Golden Jubilee. However, Moriarty has stolen the Crown Jewels. Your character is Dr. Watson and, with Holmes at your side, you must solve the mystery of the missing baubles. IBM, Apple, Mac & C64. Infocom. Circle Reader Service Number 15.

SIEG HEIL!

It's tough to find a screen-shot for a

play-by-mail game! **NEW ORDER** is a galactic adventure game of conquest and economic growth. Fully computer moderated, by the Game Master's computer - not your own. If you are new to play-by-mail games this one can be a good introduction. Your esteemed editor has played for over a year and can recommend it. Turns are \$4.50 each. C2 Simulations. Circle Reader Service Number 8.



HEY, IT'S BUCKAROO BANZAI

The hit movie, **ROBOCOP**, has been transformed into an action arcade game featuring the same storyline and adventures. You become the character and control his movements, direction and course of action. Set in Detroit, the player uses his gun, kicks, punches and jabs, while fighting to save hostages and arrest the bad guys. Throughout nine levels of play, the player can control many objects on the screen simultaneously amidst detailed graphics, enabled by the game's 2-megabit of memory. By Data East for Nintendo Entertainment Systems. Circle Reader Service Number 6.

Game Company Addresses

Abracadata PO Box 2440 Eugene, OR 97402 503-342-3030	Activision 2350 Bayshore Parkway Mountain View, CA 94043 415-960-0410	Baudville 5380 52nd Street S.E. Grand Rapids, MI 49508 616-698-0888	C2 Simulations 16081 Sherlock Lane Huntington Beach, CA 92649	Firebird/Rainbird c/o Activision 2350 Bayshore Parkway Mountain View, CA 94043 415-960-0410	Microprose Software 180 Lakefront Drive Hunt Valley, MD 21030 800-645-8632
Access Software 545 West 5th South Bountiful, UT 84010 800-824-2549	Artworx Software 1844 Penfield Rd Penfield, NJ 14526 716-385-6120	Beeshu Inc 101 Wilton Avenue Middlesex, NJ 08846 201-968-6868	Cinemaware Corp 4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd Westlake Village, CA 91362 805-379-9401	GDW PO Box 1646 Bloomington, IL 61702 309-452-3632	Mindscape 3444 Dundee Road Northbrook, IL 60062 800-221-9884
Accolade Inc 550 S. Winchester Blvd, 200 San Jose, CA 95128 408-985-1700	Avalon Hill 4517 Harford Road Baltimore, MD 21214 800-638-9292	Britannica Software 345 Fourth St San Francisco, CA 94107 415-546-1866	Cosmi Corp 1431 N. Figueroa St Wilmington, CA 90744 213-835-9687	Infocom 125 Cambridge Park Dr Cambridge, MA 02140 617-492-6000	Muse Software 5 West Ridgeville Blvd Mount Airy, MD 21771 301-831-7090
ActionSoft 210 W. Springfield Ave, 711 Champaign, IL 61820 217-398-8388	Bandai America 12951 East 166th St Cerritos, CA 90701 213-926-0947	Broderbund 17 Paul Drive San Rafael, CA 94903 800-527-6263	Data East USA 470 Needles Drive San Jose, CA 95112 408-286-7074	Interstel PO Box 57825 Webster, TX 77598 713-486-4163	New World Computing PO Box 7286 Mountain View, CA 94043 415-960-0410
 Retail price: \$39.95 Available for: Commodore 64/128, IBM PC, and APPLE II	PURE-STAT BASEBALL PURE-STAT BASEBALL is a complete statistical baseball simulation for zero, one or two players, that also includes a built-in STAT COMPILER and a program to TRADE PLAYERS, GAME PLAY, MANAGER'S DECISIONS, GRAPHICS and a complete statistical library establish PURE-STAT BASEBALL as the ULTIMATE SPORTS SIMULATION program. PURE-STAT BASEBALL's underlying statistical framework simulates the realities of baseball like never before. Within this framework the program considers each PLAYER's BATTING STATISTICS AGAINST both LEFT and RIGHTEHAND PITCHERS, along with the graphics and attributes of every MAJOR LEAGUE STADIUM from the optional STADIUM DISK. Every PLAYER's FIELDING, BASE-RUNNING and THROWING ABILITIES are also considered. Optional TEAM DISKS are available.	 PURE-STAT COLLEGE BASKETBALL PURE-STAT COLLEGE BASKETBALL is a complete statistical basketball simulation for zero, one or two players, that also includes a STAT COMPILER. The game uses coaching strategy and player statistics to determine the outcome of each play, while graphically depicting the sequence with 10 animated players on a basketball court. The game comes with 20 all time great college teams from past and present, and with an optional CREATE TEAM DISK the statistics for any college team from any division can be entered. Retail price: \$39.95 Available for: Commodore 64/128, IBM PC, and APPLE II	DataSoft 19808 Nordhoff Place Chatsworth, CA 91311 818-886-5922	Koei Corp 20000 Mariner Ave, 100 Torrance, CA 90503 213-542-6444	Nintendo 4820 150th Ave N.E. Redmond, WA 98052 800-633-3236
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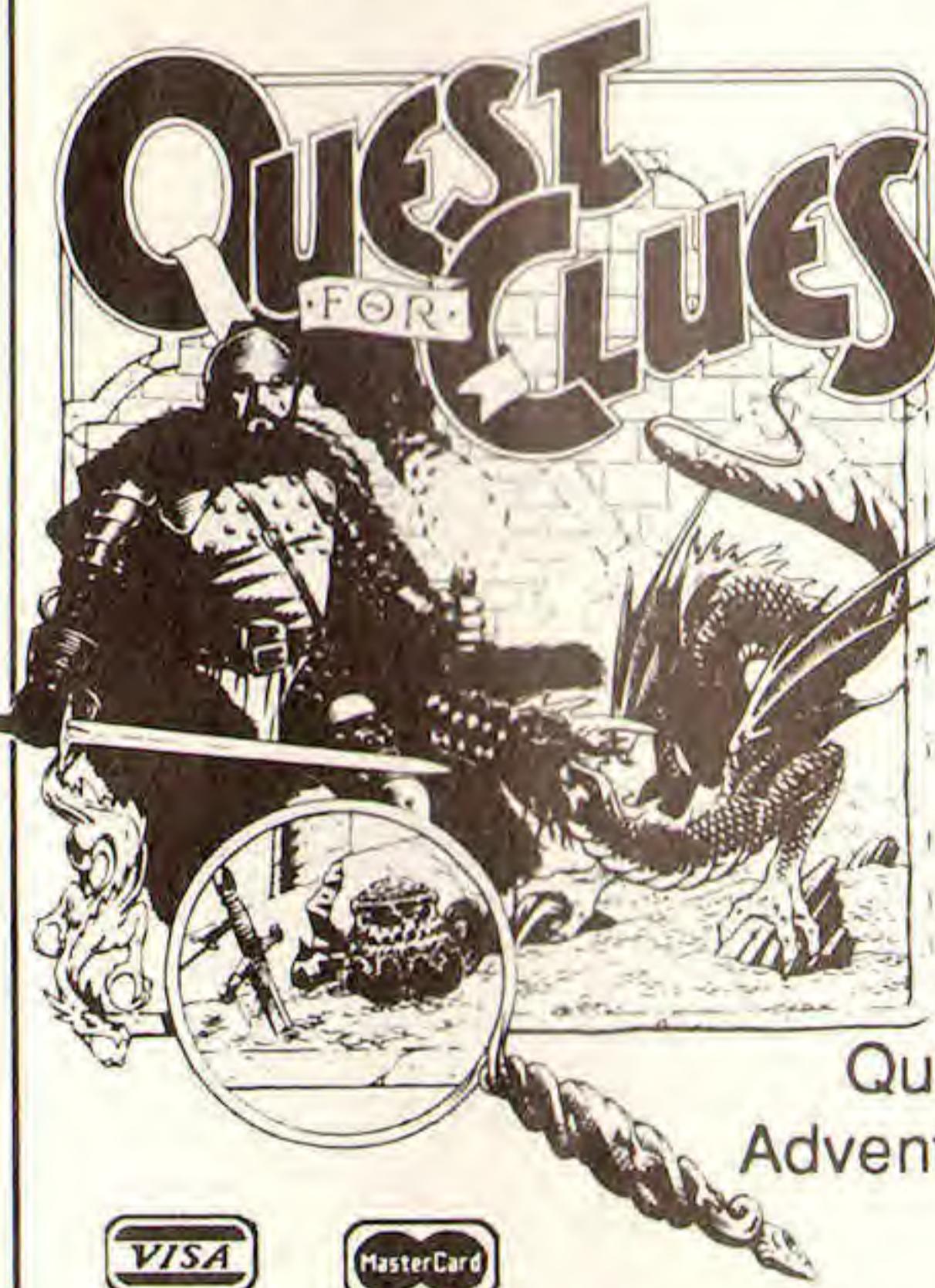
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HUNTING FOR HINTS?

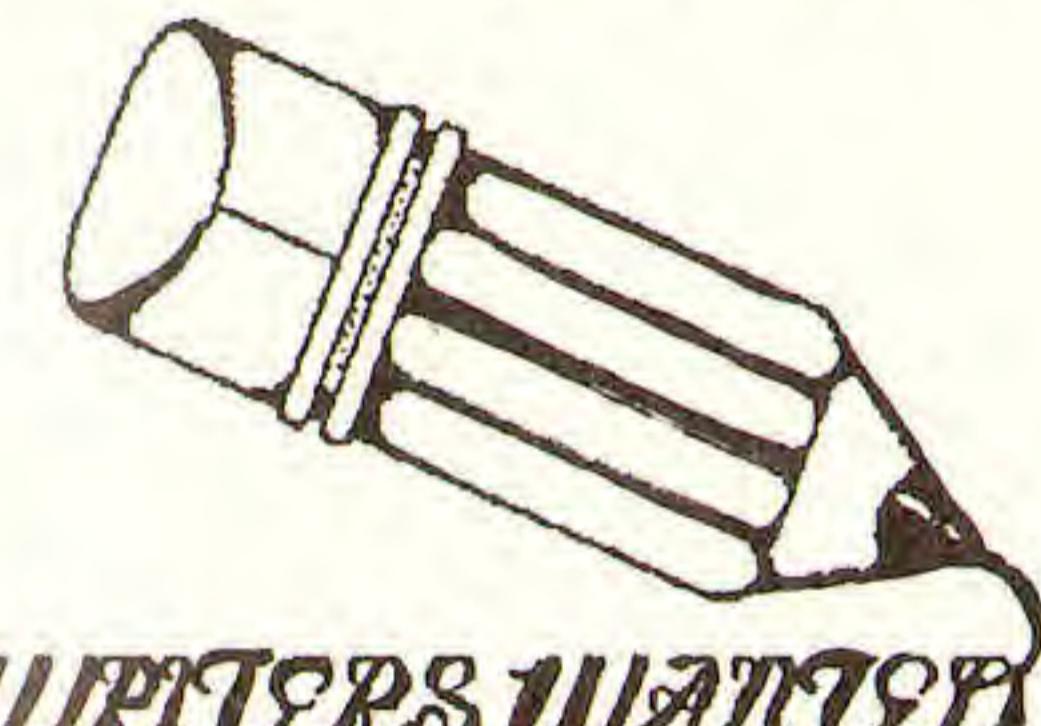


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To Our Computer Play Readers:



WRITERS WANTED

Manuscripts needed for Computer Play Magazine, specifically, articles on Computer games(tips on how to play, game ratings, etc.). Articles are needed on the best software or hardware used for entertainment purposes.

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Manuscripts accepted in typewritten format (double spaced). However, manuscripts submitted on Macintosh diskettes or IBM disks (Macintosh preferred) will be considered first.

The COMPUTER PLAY SCORECARD

One of the unique features of our magazine is the patented COMPUTER PLAY SCORECARD. In order for you to be able to utilize it to full advantage, we will explain the definitions of the various categories and give details on the final CP RATING.

NAME: Is the specific name found on the game package.

TYPE: We will attempt to specify the category of game being reviewed. Choices include ARCADE, ADVENTURE, TEXT, SIMULATION, TRADITIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, CREATIVITY, STRATEGY and CARTRIDGE.

FORMATS: The currently available formats will be listed. Normally, we will also note the version of the game that was used for the review.

PUBLISHER: The company which created the game.

DISTRIBUTOR: The company which actually sells the game.

DESIGNERS: The individuals who designed the game.

AGES: The suggested age range for which the game is appropriate.

of PLAYERS: The number of players who can play at one time.

REQUIREMENTS: Specific hardware or memory requirements beyond the minimum computer system for a specific format.

PRICE: The manufacturer's suggested retail price.

*** THE RATINGS ***

ABILITY LEVEL: Beginner, Intermediate or Advanced. Our reviewers are instructed to rate this from the viewpoint of the "average" gamer.

PACKAGING: Are the materials slick and colorful? Does the package look professional? Are "bonus" items

provided to enhance the game experience?

DOCUMENTATION: Are the instructions clear and understandable? Are all game situations covered? Are all necessary player aids or maps provided?

GRAPHICS/TEXT: Are the screen graphics clean and colorful? Are the graphics exciting? Do they add to the game? Do the graphics take full advantage of the machine's capabilities? For text games, was the story exciting and imaginative? This category includes sound and animation.

REALISM: This rating is for vehicle simulations, war games, historical games and traditional games (such as Chess). Does the game faithfully recreate the "look and feel" of the events being simulated? Are the statistics or historical facts correct? Did the game give you a true experience?

PLAYABILITY: The big one. Did the game hold your interest? Did you play for hours or get bored immediately? Did the game draw you into another world? Would you immediately want to show the game to a friend? Did the game break new ground in design? Did you want to play it again the next day?

THE NUMBERS

As you will note when reading a SCORECARD, each reviewer rates the game in each category and assigns a text and numerical rating.

A formula is then applied to the various ratings in order to reach the final CP RATING, the reviewer's overall impression of the game.

The percentages for each category are — PACKAGING 10%, DOCUMENTATION 15%, GRAPHICS/TEXT 25%, REALISM 25% and PLAYABILITY 50%.

Yes, the percentages total 125%. This is because some games can only be rated for GRAPHICS but not for REALISM (such as PAC-MAN). Others can be rated for both but one category is more important than another. In these

cases, the 25% is split. FLIGHT SIMULATOR might be rated 10% for GRAPHICS and 15% for REALISM.

The breakdown in percentages to each category is subjective but represents our best efforts to assign a single rating for every game. We feel that every category is important. The game may be great but cheap packaging can really detract from full enjoyment.

PLAYABILITY

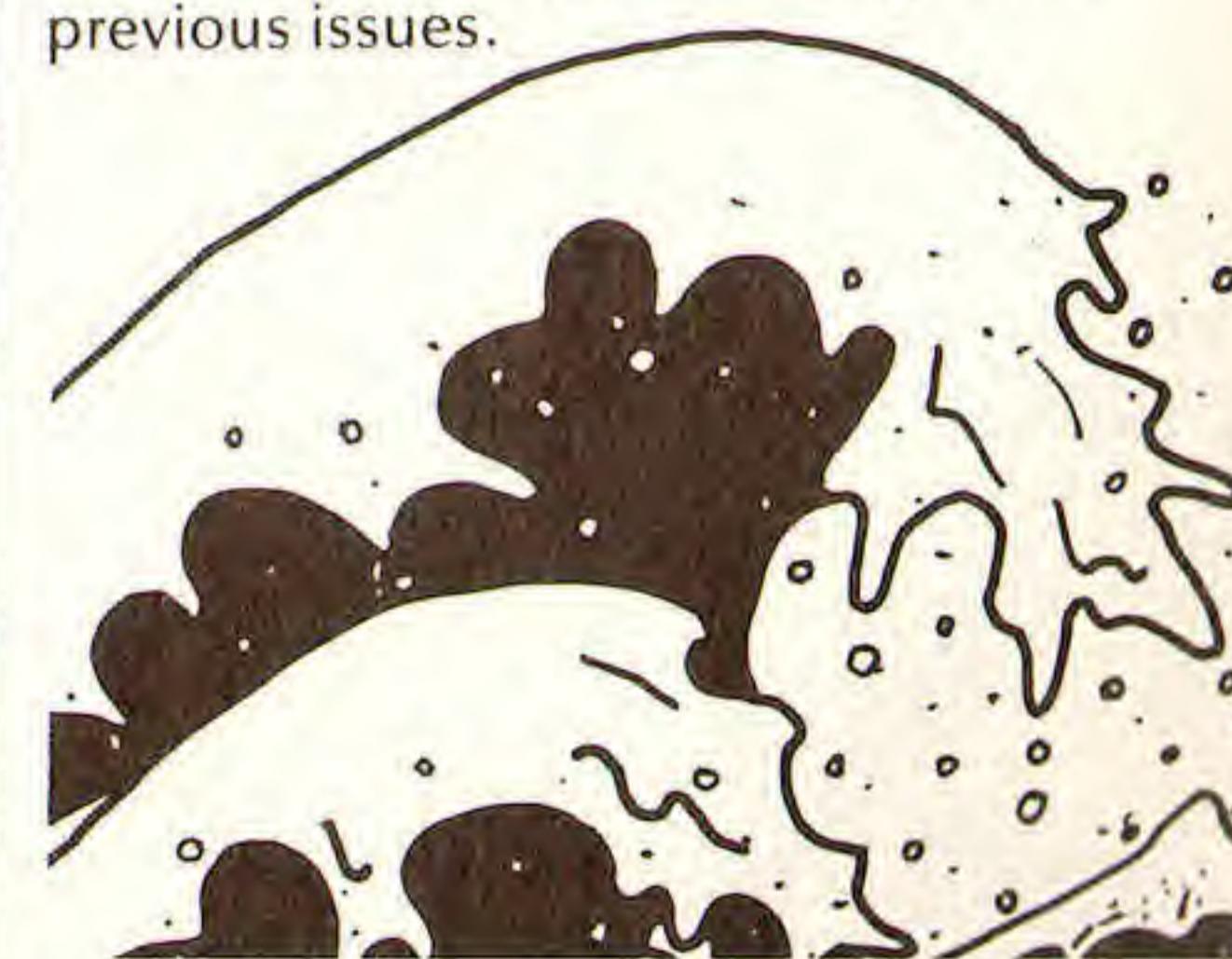
Despite the fact that there are five categories in the rating process, you will note that a game will NEVER get a truly good rating without getting a good score for playability.

READER INPUT

We give you the ratings for each category. If your own desires are different than ours then you can still work out your own formula. Perhaps you are totally uninterested in packaging. In that case, simply focus on the other category ratings.

YOU CAN'T TELL THE PLAYERS WITHOUT A....

The actual space taken up by the scorecards is small but they are the essential part of this magazine. The credibility of our reviewers and the magazine itself rides on each scorecard. We want a casual reader to be able to quickly spot the winners and losers each month. We welcome suggestions on how this process can be improved and standardized. Each issue will contain a summary of all ratings from previous issues.



Marketplace

COMPUTER PLAY Marketplace ads are available at the rate of \$200/inch per column for display ads (maximum 4 inches) and \$35/line for classified ads. Classified ads are 38 characters per line. Minimum 6 lines for 3 issues -- \$630. Both display and classified ads must be prepaid. Make check or money order payable to Computer Play Magazine. Display ads must be camera-ready. Indicate which category (listed below) where your ad should be placed or request your own heading. For more information call: 1-312-679-3254.

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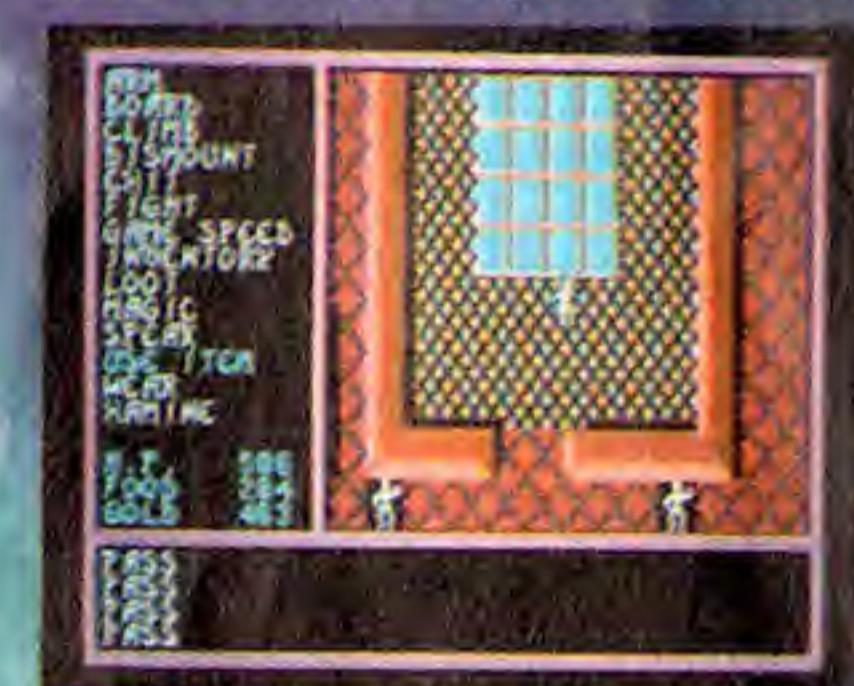
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Coming Attractions

What are you guys doing for an encore? Well, the fact that you're reading these words would indicate that the premier issue of **COMPUTER PLAY** is a reality. However, there's no rest for the weary and we are already preparing for issue #2. This time of year is especially difficult for computer publications. There will hundreds of new products introduced at the **Summer Consumer Electronics Show** during the first week of June in Chicago. It's hard for us to know what dramatic new games will appear and which ones will be critical for early coverage. You will get a full report on the show in our next issue.

There are some items that we can promise. Rusel Demaria will be introducing a new column that will cover the Macintosh game market. He guarantees to mention as many Mac titles as possible. Bob Lindstrom will be back with three more reviews. His tentative lineup includes **ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS** from Koei, **WIZARDS AND WARRIORS** from Acclaim and **PT-109** by Spectrum Holobyte.

Depending on release dates, we anticipate full reviews of **ROCKET RANGER** by Cinemaware and the latest in the **WIZARDRY** series from Sir-Tech.

We apologize if some of the above

sounds a bit vague but it's a fact of life in the computer game industry. Our desire is to keep you informed of latest and best in entertainment software but we can only review products that we can hold in our hands. If the new **WIZARDRY** appears at our door in time for a reviewer to cover it — we will. If the mailman shrugs his shoulders and says the release date has been postponed — then we try again next issue.

Basically, we hope you've enjoyed this issue of **COMPUTER PLAY** and you can be assured that the next issue will be even bigger and better.

The Academy Awards

Like a movie, this magazine would never have seen the light of day without the contributions of many people. Some have had a direct connection, some indirect, but we want to thank each and every one of them. The listed names are at random, not by degree of importance (except for the first name).

David Joseph Oxner
Bob Lindstrom
Roy Wagner
Rusel Demaria

Magdalena Sause
Roe Adams
Chris Garske
Joel Billings
Russell Sipe
Cathy Oxner
Sol Cutler
Nancy West
Hank Helley
M. Evan Brooks
Margo Comstock
William Oxner Sr
Beth Oxner
Rifka Bell

Carl Carpenter
Kirk Robinson
Gene Allen
Johnny Wilson
Shay Addams
Bill Swartz
Jay Eisenberg
Maureen Condon
Jim Fisher
Kelly Flock
Steve Largeant
Linda Blanchard
Diane Orr
Bob Jacob

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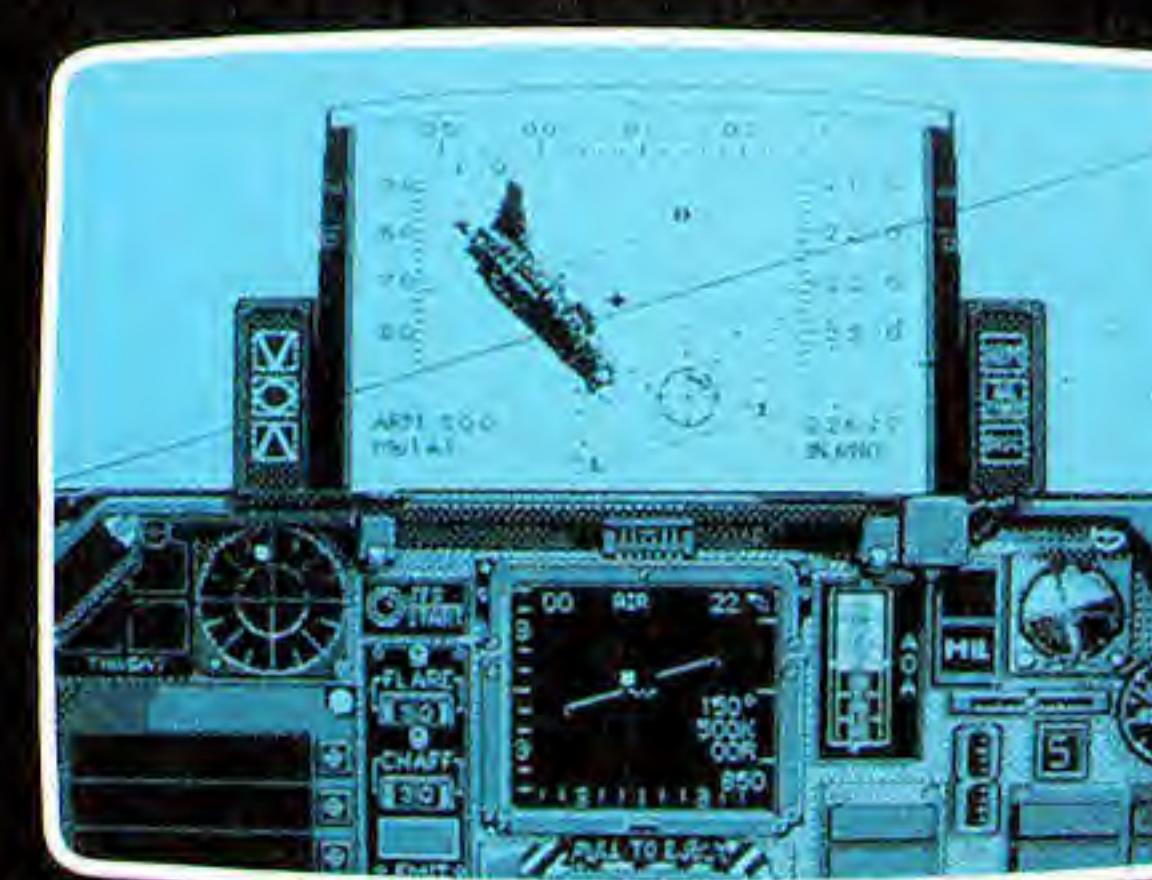
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